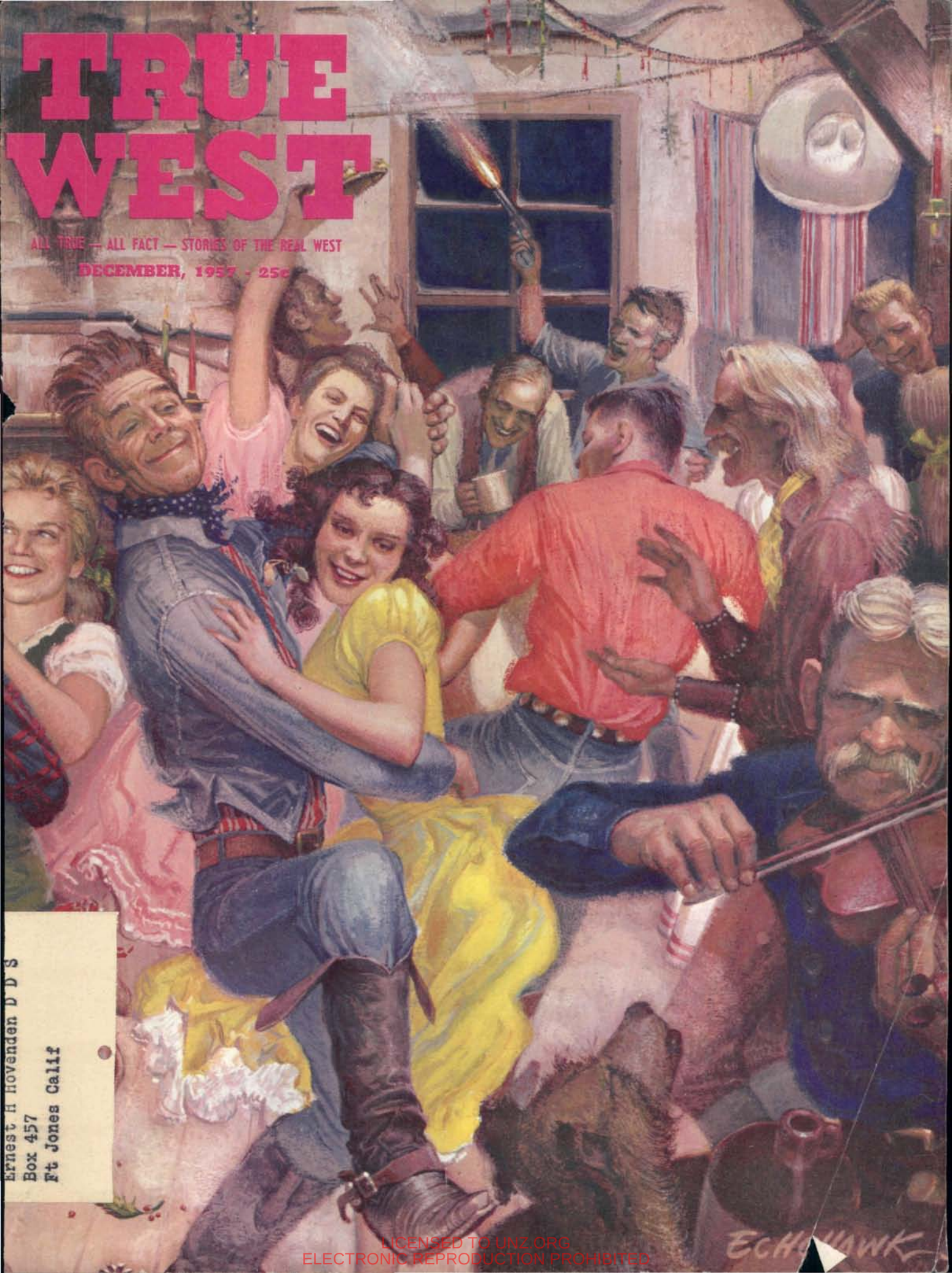
TRUE WEST

ALL TRUE — ALL FACT — STORIES OF THE REAL WEST

DECEMBER, 1957 - 25c



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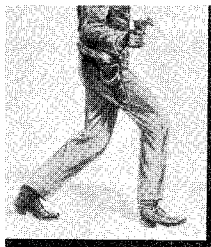


LAST CALL!

THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE TO BECOME A CHARTER SUBSCRIBER TO FRONTIER TIMES—THE FIRST ISSUE WILL BE OUT SHORTLY AFTER YOU READ THIS!

Charter readers are really a type of fraternity. The fact that they were the first subscribers seems to grow in value with the years.

We asked you in the last issue of TRUE WEST if you would back our draw if we took the first step in effecting eventual monthly publication. You who missed the complete story of these plans be sure and see the inside back cover of our September-October issue of TRUE WEST.

Well, I'm a cussed skunk-stomper if even I wasn't surprised! "Thanks, Podners!" is such a weak expression for what we all feel here at TRUE WEST. Man, you should see the mail! And the percentage of $3.00 subscriptions!

Most of you bushwhackers are cautioning us about that first issue. Okay, okay! We'll be careful and get it to you. And you gents who are ordering 5, 10, 20 and up of the first issue—we know what that's fer too, Chum! But it's okay—now's the time to do it, and not later when they all run out and become collectors' items. Demand for the first issue of TRUE WEST (as well as the others that have done gone!) is almost getting out of hand. We have been offered up to $20 per copy for those missing! And we just started in 1953!

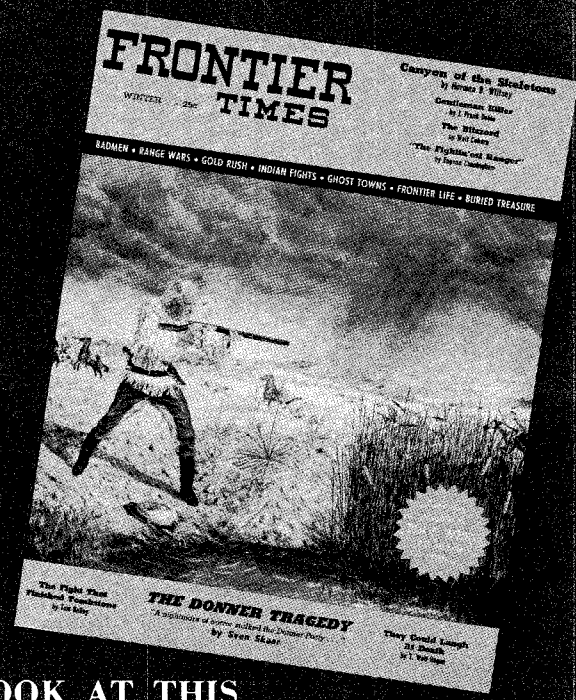
So, bog your spurs, gents, and we'll burn your brand on this promising little brush filly before she heads for the Wild Bunch.

★ DON'T MISS THIS FIRST ISSUE! ★

THE first four issues of TRUE WEST are gone. Two more become unavailable with this issue—Nos. 9 and 12. They'll all be going fast from now on. We have been offered $20.00 for one copy of an "all gone" issue already. So if you want to be sure to get this first issue of FRONTIER TIMES of the new series, fill in the blank below and get the job cinched now. TRUE WEST came out in 1953, and already the first four issues are very valuable. So make certain you start out right on FRONTIER TIMES.

Look at the line-up for our first issue. Every story came out of the TRUE WEST files and was picked as a headliner. If you miss our first issue of FRONTIER TIMES, you will, in effect, miss an issue of TRUE WEST. Also, you will have a collector's item sooner than you might think. Remember, you are not paying one cent more than if we were stepping up the issuance of TRUE WEST—you're just paying a bit sooner to make it possible for us to take the first step in giving you what you want—eventual monthly publication.

Make sure by sending your subscription today!



LOOK AT THIS LINE-UP FOR OUR FIRST ISSUE:

- THE DONNER TRAGEDY, by Sven Skaar. A nightmare of horror stalked members of the Donner Party from the day they left the Oregon-bound wagon train to follow the Hastings Cut-Off into California. What a story!
- CANYON OF THE SKELETONS, by Norman B. Wiltsey. The only instance where large Indian forces met in pitched battle. The Crows against the Sioux, Cheyennes, and Pawnees.
- GENTLEMAN KILLER, by J. Frank Dobie
- THE BLIZZARD, by Walt Coburn
- THE FIGHT THAT FINISHED TOMBSTONE, by Tom Bailey
- THEY COULD LAUGH AT DEATH, by T. Walt Hogan
- "THE FIGHTIN'EST RANGER," by Eugene Cunningham
- WELLS FARGO'S GOLD BOAT, by Richard H. Dillon
- THE LAST OWL-HOOT, by Eric Thane
- DEATH VALLEY SILVER, by Clarence E. Wager

NOTICE

We aren't including a coupon this time, because most of you do not use it anyhow (you don't want your magazine cut!) and I can just see you ruining this particular front cover!

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Coming Up!

NORM WILTSEY'S Indian Series will be continued in the next issue with the second part of "Death on the North Plains." The story will picture the brief triumph of the Sioux, through their defeat of General Crook on the Rosebud and the annihilation of Custer's cavalry at the Little Big Horn.

In "Mystery Man of Mullet Island" Nell Murbarger spins one of the strangest, most fascinating tales in her writing career. This is the haunting story of Charles Davis, who—at the age of 50—used his life savings to retrace and stake every mile of the Donner-Reed Trail from Independence, Missouri, to Fort Sutter, California, a distance of 2000 miles. Guided by some mysterious intuition beyond the power of any man to explain, Charles Davis sought out and marked the lost graves and campsites of the tragic Donner party. In Skull Valley, in western Utah, in the grim desolation of the Great Salt Desert, Davis located a group of five wagons which the Donners had abandoned—located them together with the bones of oxen, still lying beneath their yokes where they had fallen more than three-quarters of a century before!

Charles Davis returned to his lonely island home in California's Salton Sea to depict the story of the Donner tragedy in scores of weird primitive paintings that show all the frenzied agony of the doomed pioneers. Don't miss this most unusual article. And for the full, complete story of this classic in frontier hardship and horror, read "The Donner Tragedy," in FRONTIER TIMES, the new companion magazine to TRUE WEST. The first (Winter) issue of FRONTIER TIMES will be on the stands early in December. The two stories, one in TRUE WEST, the other in FRONTIER TIMES, correlate to give dramatic coverage to the most dramatic event in Western history.

IF you think the day of the range cattle rustler is a thing of the past and merely a historic topic for a magazine article, you're plumb wrong, podner! Believe it or not, there is almost as much cattle stealing today as in the wild old days of the open range. Lewis Nordyke, in his article "They're STILL Rustling Cattle!" tells the story of these modern pirates of the West, and how the cattle detectives run them down.

James Y. Nicol's "He Wrestled A Cougar!" is a pretty potent argument against the nature books who maintain that cougars are essentially cowardly animals who rarely, if ever, attack human beings. Guides and trappers in British Columbia know better. Gerald Walters, a big-game hunter, learned that the hard way when a hunger-crazed female cougar attacked him in the bush. He wrestled the big cat to a draw in a life-or-death struggle until his friend Buck Richmond killed her with a Boy Scout hatchet. This is the kind of off-trail yarn that's apt to stick in your memory—especially when you're walking down a lonely woods trail at dusk!

"Slaughter Odds, 80 to 1," is the incredible story of the "bullet proof" Spanish-American, Elfego Baca, who, single-handed, fought off eighty armed Texans in a gun-battle at Frisco, New Mexico, in 1884. Acquitted of a murder charge for the killing of four of his assailants, Baca was elected to the post of sheriff!

Sam Howe writes the thrilling saga of "Steamboat—King of the Buckers!" in a vivid article on the grand old rodeo champ. Steamboat stacks up with Midnight as one of the best broncs that ever piled a bronc-twister.

"Sod-house Frontier," by Samuel Sisco, is the story of how the early Kansas pioneers built their homes. Mr. Sisco, a well-known writer of Western books and articles, has devoted a lifetime of research to pioneer architecture and

(Continued on page 48)

11th ANNUAL ROUNDUP of

Western Christmas Cards

Illustrated by Robert R. Lorenz

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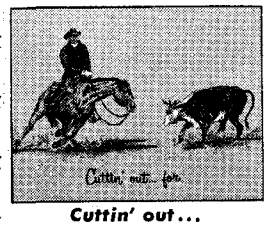
Greeting: "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year"



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Whole No. 24

All True—All Fact—Stories of the Real West

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A "SMALL" PUBLICATION

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Please inquire before sending in original art.

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ABOUT THE COVER

This is old Joe doing the talking. I'm hurting physical and mental both today—physical because my right leg's aching and mental because it's one of those days when everything turns out blamed horrible—and then you get the afternoon mail containing 24 bills! If someone were to say to me: "Cheer up! The worst is yet to come!" I'd change the heading above to "Last Will and Testament!"

But I look at that cover drawing for this issue and it makes a warm glow go all over me. I like that thing! Do you? I sort of stumbled across the idea while browsing through the poem you see below, and Echohawk took it from there. I think he did a terrific job.

William Lawrence ("Larry") Chittenden, 1862-1934, is perhaps best known for this poem. A former newspaperman, he was a native of New Jersey. Larry moved to Anson, Texas, around 1883 and ran a ranch there for several years. He was known as the Poet Ranchman. His book, *Ranch Verses,* first appeared in 1893 and ran into at least sixteen editions. Copies of the first edition are scarce.

Anson is a busy town of 2,700 people and is located 160 miles west of Fort Worth. Since 1885 the Ball has been an annual event. It is sponsored now by the Texas Cowboys' Christmas Ball Association, Inc. Last Christmas the Ball was a big, three-evening affair—December 20-21-22, and everybody wore pioneer costumes.

Now, without further speech-making, here is

The Cowboys' Christmas Ball

WAY out in Western Texas, where the Clear Fork's waters flow,
Where the cattle are a-browzin', an' the Spanish ponies grow;
Where the Northers come a-whistlin' from beyond the Neutral strip;
And the prairie dogs are sneezin', as if they had "The Grip";
Where the cayotes come a-howlin' 'round the ranches after dark,
And the mocking-birds are singin' to the lovely "medder lark"
Where the 'possum and the badger, and rattlesnakes abound,
And the monstrous stars are winkin' o'er a wilderness profound;
Where the lonesome, tawny prairies melt into airy streams,
While the Double Mountains slumber, in heavenly kinds of dreams;
Where the antelope is grazin' and the lonely plovers call—
It was there that I attended
THE COWBOYS' CHRISTMAS BALL.

THE town was Anson City, old Jones's county seat,
Where they raise Polled Angus cattle, and waving whiskered wheat;
Where the air is soft and "bammy," an' dry an' full of health,
And the prairies is explodin' with agricultural wealth;
Where they print the *Texas Western,* that Hec. McCann supplies,
With news and yarns and stories, uv most amazin' size;
Where Frank Smith "pulls the badger," on knowin' tenderfeet,
And Democracy's triumphant, and mighty hard to beat;
Where lives that good old hunter, John Milsap from Lamar,
Who "used to be the Sheriff, back East, in Paris, sah!"
'Twas there, I say, at Anson, with the lively "widder Wall,"
That I went to that reception,
THE COWBOYS' CHRISTMAS BALL.

THE boys had left the ranches and come to town in piles;
The Ladies — "kinda scatterin' " — had gathered in for miles.
And yet the place was crowded, as I remember well,
'Twas got for the occasion, at "The Morning Star Hotel."
The music was a fiddle an' a lively tambourine,
And a "viol come imported," by the stage from Abilene.
The room was togged out gorgeous — with mistletoe and shawls,
And candles flickered frescoes, around the airy walls.
The "wimmin folks" looked lovely — the boys looked kinder treed,
Till their leader commenced yellin, "Whoa! fellers—let's stampede,"
And the music started sighin', an' awailin' through the hall,
As a kind of introduction to
THE COWBOYS' CHRISTMAS BALL.

THE leader was a feller that came from Swenson's ranch,
They called him "Windy Billy," from little Deadman's Branch.
His rig was kinder keerless—big spurs and high-heeled boots;
He had the reputation that comes when "a feller shoots."
His voice was like a bugle upon the mountain's height;
His feet were animated, an' a *mighty, movin' sight,*
When he commenced to holler, "Neow fellers, stake yer pen!
"Lock horns ter all them heifers, an' russle 'em like men.
"Saloot yer lovely critters; neow swing an' let 'em go,
"Climb the grape vine 'round 'em — all hands do-ce-do!
"You Mavericks, jine the round-up — Jest skip her waterfall,"
Man, hit wuz gettin' happy at
THE COWBOYS' CHRISTMAS BALL.

THE boys were tolerable skittish, the ladies powerful neat,
That old bass viol's music *got there with both feet!*
That wailin', frisky fiddle, I never shall forget;
And Windy kept a singin' — I think I hear him yet —
"O Xes, chase your squirrels, an' cut 'em to one side,
"Spur Treadwell to the centre, with Cross P. Charley's bride,
"Doc Hollis down the middle, an' twine the ladies' chain,
"Varn Andrews pen the fillies in big T Diamond's train,
"All pull yer freight tergether, neow swallow fork an' change,
"Big Boston lead the trail herd, through little Pitchfork's range.
"Purr 'round yer gentle pussies, neow rope 'em! Balance all!"
Hit wuz gettin' mighty active at
THE COWBOYS' CHRISTMAS BALL.

THE dust riz fast an' furious, we all just galloped 'round,
Till the scenery got so giddy, that Z Bar Dick was downed.
We buckled to our partners, an' told 'em to hold on,
Then shook our hoofs like lightning, until the early dawn,
Don't tell me 'bout Dodge or Abilene—no sir'ee!
That whirl at Anson City just takes the cake with me.
I'm sick of lazy shufflin's, of them I've had my fill,
Give me a frontier break-down, backed up by Windy Bill.
McAllister ain't nowhar! when Windy leads the show,
I've seen 'em both in harness, and so I sorter know —
Oh, Bill, I sha'n't forget yer, and I'll oftentimes recall,
That lively gaited sworray —
THE COWBOYS' CHRISTMAS BALL.

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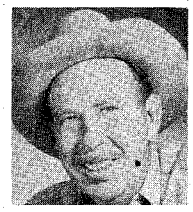
Happy Xmas!

Last year you folks asked what us TRUE WEST polecats looked like, so we risked everything and ran our pictures.

Well, we had such a terrific decline in advertising, subscriptions and newsstand sales that I directed our photos be put under lock and key.

But the cover story and poem took up so much room that the remaining odd-sized space wouldn't befit a sane feature—so here's the crazy gang again. If TRUE WEST lives through this, it can take anything!

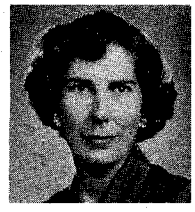
Joe


Fred

Norm

Angel

Dr. Webb


Elizabeth

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Gloria

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Virginia

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From the Minnesota frontier across the Missouri to the lands of Red Cloud, Crazy Horse, and Sitting Bull, swept the red tide of war with the white man

DEATH

On The North Plains

BY NORMAN B. WILTSEY

MIDSUMMER was usually a peaceful time among the Santee Sioux of Minnesota—a time of families visiting, fun and relaxation, when women laughed and gossiped, children played, and men looked to their weapons in preparation for the fall hunting. But midsummer of 1862 was a stark exception, for the Indians were hungry.

Treaty money for 1862, in the amount of $20,000, had not arrived from Washington on July 1. The white traders on the Reservation had promptly shut off the tribe's credit, with one sterling humanitarian suggesting that the Indians eat grass if they were hungry. The anger and resentment of the Sioux increased with their hunger as July grew into August. On August 4th, nearly 600 armed warriors advanced on the Lower Sioux Agency below the mouth of the Redwood on the Minnesota River and demanded food of the Agent, Major Thomas Galbraith. Alarmed, Galbraith told the leaders of the band to go back to their homes and hunt until he sent for them. In view of the fact that the nearest buffalo ranges were well over a hundred miles away and they had no food to sustain them on the journey, the Indians refused to leave.

Ignoring the presence of a detachment of troops camped near the Agency, the starving warriors hacked down the doors of the warehouse and appropriated a hundred sacks of flour. The troops charged and drove the Indians out of the warehouse, but neither soldiers nor warriors fired a shot. Major Galbraith called upon Little Crow, chief of the band, for a parley and bloodshed was averted.

Little Crow in turn called upon the Agent for provisions for his starving people. Galbraith replied by offering a two-day supply of food until a general council could be arranged with all the chiefs and headmen. Little Crow assented to this, and the Sioux immediately set about preparing breakfast. Captain Marsh, military commander at nearby Fort Ridgely, arrived at the Agency that night and agreed to issue annuity goods held in the warehouse and enough food to carry the Indian families until a solution could be worked out with Washington. This appeared to satisfy Little Crow, and the warriors left for their homes to prepare for an early buffalo hunt.

But neither Major Galbraith nor Captain Marsh were deluded into thinking the trouble was over. Little Crow shrewdly realized that the Government, involved in the Civil War, would not concern itself with hungry Indians in Minnesota. There were ten thousand dollars worth of annuity goods resting in the warehouse at the Agency, and in the stores of the three traders at the Agency were food and blankets, guns and ammunition. Little Crow meant to take all, without waiting for any vague solution to be worked out with Washington.

THE SIOUX struck the Agency at sunrise on August 18, looting and burning warehouse and stores but not harming the Agent. Philander Prescott, the Government interpreter, and the Reverend S. D. Hinman, the Episcopal missionary, were also spared. The trader who had advised the Sioux to eat grass if they were hungry did not fare so well. He was found dead before the smoking embers of his store, his throat slashed to the backbone and two arrows piercing his heart. His tongue had been ripped out and his yawning, bloody mouth stuffed with grass.

Another trader, who had always assured himself of extra profits by weighing his hand every time he weighed out supplies to sell the Indians, was also found dead with his severed right hand resting on his scale.

Over a thousand whites died in the savage outbreak as raging war parties ravaged the Minnesota frontier. Many more were saved as the Christian Indians, the "Cuthairs," who had been converted by the missionaries, heroically risked their own lives to protect their white friends and neighbors. John Otherday, Solomon Twostars, Simon, Little Paul, Gabriel Renville, Lorenzo Lawrence, and others stood fast to their religious vows amid all the horror and massacre of the uprising. Grimly they stood guard about the homes of the missionaries until the wild, whooping raiders had passed; then, when the hostiles were intent upon looting, the Christian Indians escorted their friends to safety.

From Glencoe to Spirit Lake and on to Sioux Falls swept the marauders. Attacks upon Fort Ridgely and New Ulm followed. Governor Ramsey called upon Colonel Henry H. Sibley to put down the uprising, and Colonel Sibley took the field at the head of a command of 1400 men including four companies of the Sixth Minnesota Volunteer Infantry.

Unable to recruit reinforcements from

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the canny chiefs of the Upper Sioux Agency or from the distant Teton Sioux beyond the Missouri, Little Crow and his raiders went down to defeat before Sibley's troops in battles at Birch Coule and Wood Lake. The fighting was all over early in October. Hundreds of Little Crow's warriors were rounded up by the soldiers, but the chief was not among them. Three hundred Sioux were tried by military court and sentenced to death, but President Lincoln carefully reviewed the verdicts of the court and commuted to life imprisonment all but forty of the sentences. Of the condemned warriors, one—a halfbreed named Henry Milford—was also subsequently commuted to life imprisonment. Another died before his warrant was returned from Washington. The doomed thirty-eight were hanged from a common gallows at Mankato, Minnesota, on December 26, 1862.

Little Crow himself, with his hair cropped close to his head and wearing the clothes of a common warrior, eluded capture for months. The old chief was finally shot down by a farmer in McLeod County, Minnesota, as he skulked in the woods with his sixteen-year-old son. Little Crow and the boy were picking berries when the farmer and his son fired upon them. The boy was unhit and fled into the forest. Exhausted and starving, he was later picked up by a military patrol near Devils Lake. The emaciated body of Little Crow was loaded into a farm wagon, lugged to a slaughterhouse and tossed into the stinking offal pit along with the bones and entrails of slain hogs and cattle.

THE summer of 1863 was hot and dry on the Plains, and the buffaloes drifted east of the Missouri in search of better grazing. The Teton (Prairie) Sioux followed the buffaloes, and clashed with General Sibley's troops in June. The fight was brief and there were few casualties on either side, but both soldiers and Indians knew that more fighting was on the way. Sitting Bull somberly warned his people that the white soldiers would soon "set the prairie on fire." Yet for the rest of that year an uneasy peace prevailed on the North Plains.

General Alfred Sully fulfilled Sitting Bull's prophecy in midsummer of '64 when he attacked the Hunkpapa medicine man's camp in the Killdeer Mountains. Inkpaduta (Scarlet Point), a chief who had played a prominent part in the Minnesota uprising of 1862, escaped Sully's cavalry, but thirty Yanktonais and Santee warriors were killed. The Sioux also lost most of their *tipis* and their winter meat supply. Sully burned their camp and buffalo robes, shot all the dogs in sight, and marched off through the Badlands toward the Yellowstone River. Sitting Bull's angry warriors harassed the troops every mile of the way until they ran out of what little ammunition they possessed and dropped back with their wounded to make a new camp near water.

In 1865 a treaty was made by Generals Harney and Sanborn with the three allied tribes—Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes. On paper it seemed a fair and satisfactory arrangement, guaranteeing to the three tribes the Powder River country. This vast tract of land, lying between the Black Hills, the Rocky Mountains, and the Yellowstone River, was still good buffalo country. Leading chiefs of the Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes were well pleased with the deal and earnestly hoped that this time the white men would keep their word.

Vain hope—the ink was scarcely dry on the treaty paper when the whites repudiated all their promises.

Gold—the precious metal the Indians scornfully called "yellow iron"—was responsible for the repudiation. Discovery of rich gold deposits in Montana caused the Government to try to work another deal with the Sioux permitting a right of way through the Powder River country to the gold fields.

Red Cloud, chief of the Oglala band of Bad Faces, refused to cooperate even when Commissioner E. B. Taylor of the Indian Bureau showed up at Fort Laramie early in the summer of 1866, laden with gifts for his "red brothers." Taylor persuaded many of the so-called "white man's Indians" hanging around the fort to sign a treaty granting the road. Red Cloud, Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses, and the fiery Crazy Horse rode into Laramie to see what was going on. While they were powwowing, Colonel Henry Carrington and his command arrived at the fort en route to the Powder River country to garrison Fort Connor on the Bozeman Trail, running straight through Sioux territory east of the Big Horns, and to build two new forts along the Trail.

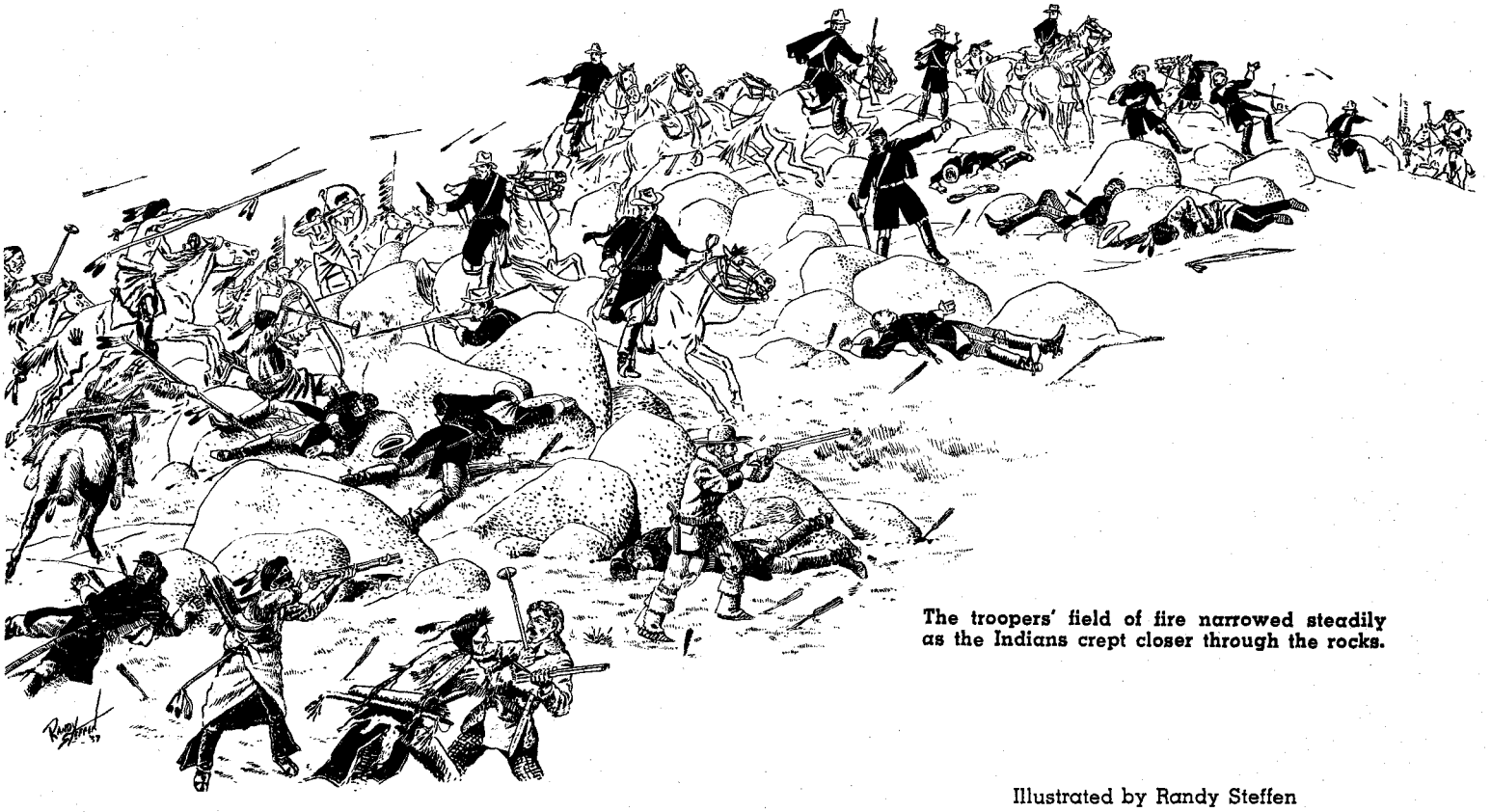
The Sioux chiefs were furious at the news of Carrington's mission. Red Cloud spoke hotly to the Colonel: "The Great Father sends us presents and wants a new road, but the white chief goes with soldiers to *steal* that road before the Indians say yes or no!"

RED CLOUD, Man-Afraid and Crazy Horse left the council without accepting any of Commissioner Taylor's gifts. Jim Bridger, Carrington's head guide, silently watched them stalk to their horses, mount, and gallop off. The old frontiersman turned to Carrington and commented dryly: "Wal, Colonel, thar goes our last chance to make peace. If we move into Sioux huntin' grounds *now,* we're gone beaver!"

"I have my orders," replied Carrington crisply.

Bridger spat expressively, "Sure, Colonel—you got your orders. And I got my h'ar—for awhile yet, anyhow."

What made the situation even more exasperating to Bridger and other veteran plainsmen was not only the in-



The troopers' field of fire narrowed steadily as the Indians crept closer through the rocks.

Illustrated by Randy Steffen

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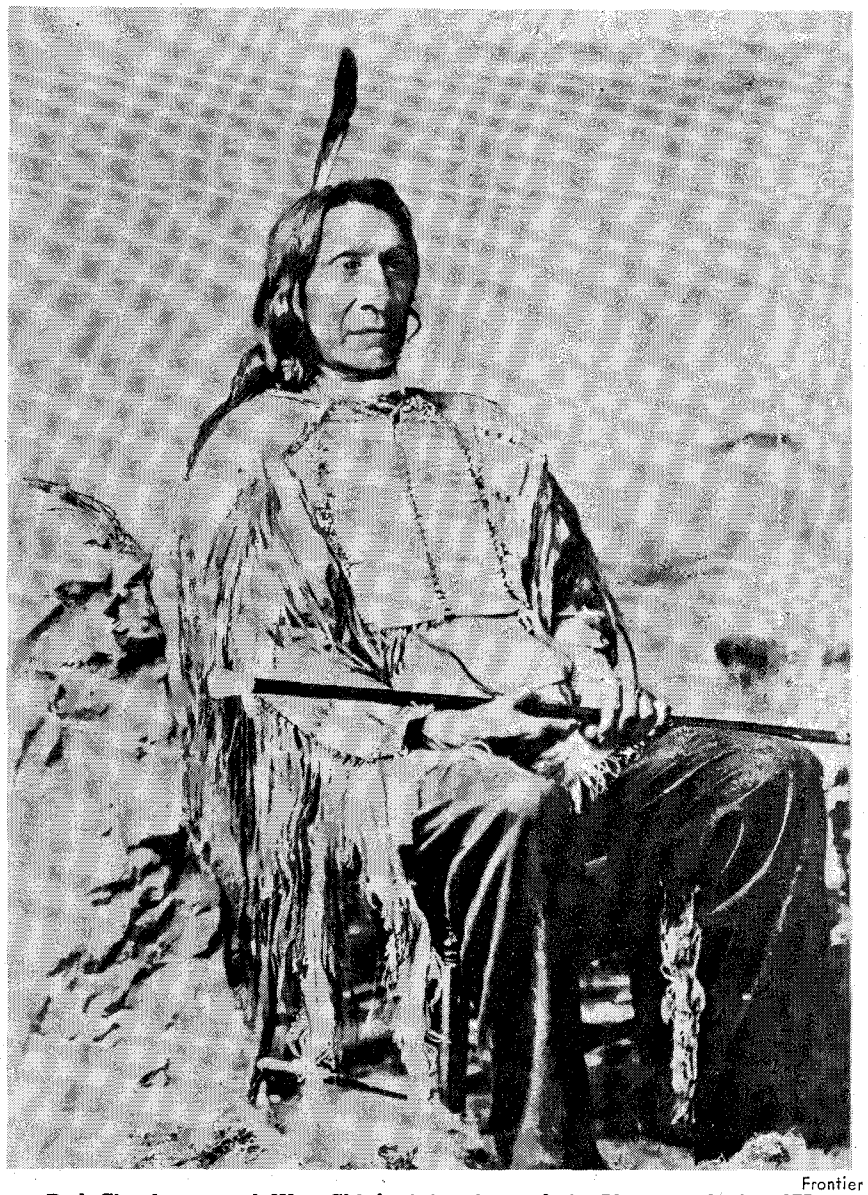

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Red Cloud, a noted War Chief, sitting in a chair. Photo made in 1875.

disputable fact that the Indians were justified in their protests of the military invasion of their hunting grounds, but that the mission just didn't make sense. Bridger himself, in 1864, had laid out a wagon road *west* of the Big Horn Mountains and well out of Sioux territory. In addition, "Bridger's Trail" was shorter than Bozeman's Trail. But, for mysterious reasons known only to themselves, the top Army brass wanted a road and forts in the heartland of the Sioux country. So, against his better judgment, Carrington proceeded on his foolhardy mission.

After garrisoning Fort Connor and Fort Reno on the Bozeman Trail, Carrington spent the late summer and autumn of 1866 building a new post on Big Piney Creek. Indians lurked about the post daily, ready to run off stock or pick off an unwary trooper. But there was no all-out attack by the hostiles, and Carrington ordered no sorties against them. By the coming of winter, the eager young officers in his command were bored and restless and covertly derisive of the Colonel's safety-first policy. Big talk went on nightly in Officers Row. Captain William Fetterman—breveted Lieutenant-Colonel for distinguished service during the recent Civil War—requested permission of the C.O. to lead fifty men on an expedition to strike the Sioux camps along Tongue River. Carrington refused Fetterman permission, and the angry Captain bitterly declared: "With fifty men I could ride through the whole Sioux Nation!"

Fetterman got his first chance to prove his theory early in December, when he led a detail of forty men to rescue a wood train attacked by Indians. He charged the hostiles recklessly at the head of his handful of men, drove them into the hills, and suddenly found himself surrounded by yelling warriors. A strong relief party from the fort extricated him after a sharp fight, with the loss of only a few men. The fearless Captain was lucky—once.

ON DECEMBER 16, a half-breed scout brought word to Colonel Carrington that the allied tribes were powwowing in the hills to the north, and that Red Cloud and Crazy Horse were talking war. Carrington's grave concern at this alarming news was not shared by his staff members. The Colonel's fear of an all-out attack by the swarming hostiles became a subject for much ribald merriment among them. "Old Jelly Spine" and "Granny Pussy Foot" were among the printable epithets the junior officers called the Colonel behind his back. They blithely ignored the chilling fact that Fort Kearney was isolated from all supplies, that ammunition was low for the old-fashioned muzzle-loading muskets of the infantry and the breech-loading carbines of the cavalry, and that their total force was but 350 men opposed to thousands of warriors. Colonel Carrington never forgot it for a moment.

December 21, 1866, dawned clear and cold at Fort Phil Kearney. The lookout, posted on nearby Pilot Hill, signaled that all visible terrain was clear of hostiles; so the wood train was ordered out as usual. At 11 o'clock, however, the lookout excitedly flashed another signal: Indians were attacking the mule-drawn wagons corraled a mile west of the stockade.

The trumpeter blared *Boots and Saddles,* and the cavalry rushed for their mounts. The infantry piled out of barracks, eager to get in on the fun. A relief column was quickly formed up, and Captain James Powell was given the command. Powell had already snapped the order to march when Captain Fetterman, ranking him, asked for the command. Colonel Carrington hesitated, remembering Fetterman's reckless nature. But Carrington, a strict adherent to all the protocol that went with Army rank, did not hesitate long. Reluctantly he turned the command over to Fetterman, after first giving him exact written orders: *Relieve the wood train. Under no circumstances pursue the Indians beyond Lodge Trail Ridge.*

Still worried, Colonel Carrington repeated the order verbally to Captain Fetterman as the detachment moved out the gate. Fetterman replied with a snappy salute and a crisp "Yes sir!"

According to Fetterman's weird reasoning, he had more than enough men to whip the whole Sioux Nation: fifty infantry and two officers, twenty-six cavalry and one officer, and two civilians. The two civilians carried new 16-shot Henry repeating rifles, and were anxious to try them out on human game.

Through his field glasses, Colonel Carrington watched in horrified amazement as Fetterman headed his column not in the direction of the besieged wagon train, but in a flanking movement to take the Indians attacking it in the rear.

Soon Fetterman encountered a dozen Indians skulking on horseback through the brush. This was Crazy Horse, leading a party of braves in the age-old Indian decoy trick. No plainsman would have fallen for this ancient stratagem, but Civil War veteran Captain Fetterman had nothing but contempt for Indian tactics. He ordered the cavalry to the chase. Lieutenant George Grummond, leading the horsemen, waved his hat in gleeful salute as his troopers galloped off in pursuit of the hostiles. The decoys retreated before them, up the travois trail running along the Ridge—the Ridge that would soon be named Massacre Hill.

Over the hump of the Ridge and down the trail to the flats below advanced the soldiers, the cavalry still in the lead. Below the Ridge, on the flats near the fork of Peno Creek, the deadly trap was sprung. Crazy Horse, tolling the troops on for the slaughter, at this point suddenly divided his decoys to ride across each other's trail in a pre-arranged attack signal to the hundreds of warriors hidden in the woods and rocks on either hand.

THE MINNICONJOUS, led by Thunder Hawk, attacked the huddled *Wasichu* soldiers from one side, while the Cheyennes and Oglalas swept in from the other flank, He Dog and Lone Bear

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in the van. In a handful of flashing seconds, the screeching warriors ringed the doomed soldiers in a death circle.

Quickly the infantry went down before the terrific onslaught, but the cavalrymen dismounted and took cover among the boulders along the trail. It was a hopeless maneuver, and every trooper knew it. Yet coolly they obeyed Lieutenant Grummond's orders to fire a volley, then retreat back up the trail. Each man knew that he was marked for death, but there was no panic. Step by step, in perfect order they withdrew—firing, reloading, firing, reloading. At the top of the Ridge the maddened horses, plunging and screaming with agony from arrow wounds, broke loose from the horse holders and raced for the fort. "Let them go!" yelled Crazy Horse to his braves, but some of the young men took out after the horses, giving Grummond a chance to settle his few remaining men behind boulders on the top of the Ridge.

Here the final bloody scene was played, as Grummond and his gallant handful fought vainly to hold off two thousand warriors. The breech-loading carbines of the cavalry and the repeating rifles of the two civilians could be fired much more rapidly than the muzzle-loading muskets of the fallen infantry, but the end was inevitable. The troopers' field of fire narrowed steadily as the Indians crept closer through the rocks. Finally, on signal, warriors charged from both sides, and the fight was over in a burst of fury. War clubs clashed briefly against clubbed carbines as the white soldiers were literally beaten to death. A cavalryman's dog was the last to die, pinned by an arrow as he scooted yelping for the fort.

Colonel Carrington sent out a strong relief column under Captain Ten Eyck at the first ominous sound of heavy firing, but the brief "battle" was over before Ten Eyck reached the crest of the Ridge. No living creature moved among the blood-stained rocks atop the Ridge. The fast-rising storm wind had swept away the blue veils of acrid powder smoke; the Indians had disappeared.

Cautiously, Ten Eyck moved his small command down the trail past the stripped and scalped corpses of Lieutenant Grummond and twelve troopers. Huddled in a space about forty feet square, Ten Eyck found the bodies of Captains Fetterman and Brown and thirty infantrymen. Brown and Fetterman lay side by side, each with a bullet hole in the forehead. Powder burns indicated that each had saved his last revolver bullet for himself. Many of the dead were scalped and slashed and beaten almost to pieces. All were stripped of clothes and weapons.

Silently, Captain Ten Eyck motioned to his sergeant to start gathering the naked, battered corpses. Ten Eyck choked with emotion and his eyes filled with tears as he looked down upon the bodies of his dead comrades.

Crazy Horse and his decoys appeared suddenly on the flats below as the burdened relief column turned back toward the fort. Heavy snow blotted out the figures of the scornfully gesticulating hostiles before Ten Eyck and his men reached the top of the Ridge.

THE allied tribes did not follow up their *coup*. The weather turned bitterly cold as the blizzard whooped in from the north, and the great band of warriors returned to their camp on Tongue River, first to mourn their fourteen dead and then to celebrate their victory.

Fearful of the all-out attack that never came, Colonel Carrington placed the women and children in the powder magazine and mined the fort for total destruction if the swarming hostiles breached the stockade. At eleven o'clock that night, scout John "Portugee" Phillips set out on the Colonel's fleet Kentucky thoroughbred to brave the blizzard on an epic 230 mile journey to Fort Laramie with news of the disaster. Phillips made the ride, though Colonel Carrington's gallant thoroughbred died at the finish of the grueling trip. The exhausted scout arrived at Laramie on Christmas Eve, while a gay ball was in progress in "Old Bedlam," the officers' quarters. Phillips delivered his message and fell unconscious to the ballroom floor.

A powerful relief column left Laramie for the isolated fort on the Piney on December 27. The troops found the garrison and women and children at Kearney in no danger. Phillips' harrowing ride had been in vain; the hostile Indians were still holed up in winter camp on Tongue River.

The so-called "Fetterman Massacre" sparked a Government investigation of the muddled Indian situation on the northern frontier. Colonel Carrington was relieved of his command and peremptorily ordered to leave Fort Phil Kearney, although later an Army Court of Inquiry completely vindicated him of any negligence of duty.

The spring and summer of 1867 on the North Plains was devoted to inconclusive skirmishing in the field and vague peace talks on the diplomatic front. The soldiers in the field made out better than the inept and bumbling Peace Commission. This august body, set up by Congress on July 30, 1867, consisted of N. G. Taylor, J. B. Henderson, General Sanborn, General Harney, General Terry, General Augur, General Sherman, and Colonel Tappan. (How a mere Colonel was selected along with all that top brass is a mystery.)

The Peace Commission had three worthy but utterly impractical objectives: (1) "to abolish Indian wars forever by removing their causes; (2) "to influence the Indians to abandon their nomadic life and take up farming; (3) "to keep the Indians from interfering with the construction of railroads across the plains, and from attacking frontier settlements."

FULL of high-minded resolve, the Commission went first to North Platte, Nebraska, for a conference with the Sioux and Northern Cheyennes. They cooled their heels for weeks waiting for the invited chiefs of these tribes to show up, but the hostiles were having too much fun harassing the garrisons of Fort Phil Kearney and Fort C. F. Smith on the Big Horn River. The rampaging Cheyennes wrecked and burned a railroad train at Plum Creek, Nebraska, south of the Platte. Captain Frank North and his Pawnee Scouts chased the raiders in a long running fight, killing and scalping fifteen warriors. Still, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Mr. Taylor, insisted that peace could be made with the warring tribesmen. Colonel Tappan supported Taylor. Generals Sherman and Harney snorted at this naive statement, declaring that nothing short of a decisive military defeat of the hostiles would bring peace to the plains. General Sanborn joked about the whole affair and expressed the wish that it would be soon terminated. Generals Terry and Augur had little to say either way on the subject. Senator Henderson listened closely to the booming arguments between Commissioner Taylor and Sherman and Harney, and scribbled voluminous notes.

Finally the chiefs came in and the council began. By this time the situation between the Peace Commissioners was such that harmonious cooperation was impossible. Taylor spoke first for the white men, introducing his companions and assuring the Indians that he had come from the Great Father in

Maj. Wilhelm, of the 8th U. S. Infantry took this photo of Crazy Horse. There is controversy over whether or not this is the famous Chief Crazy Horse, or the warrior who took his wife after his death.

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Washington expressly to hear their grievances and to work out a solution. This speech drew an approving chorus of *"Hou-hous!"* from the assembled chiefs.

Taylor had asked to hear the Indians' grievances, and he heard plenty. The first and biggest gripe of the hostiles concerned the roads built by the whites through their hunting grounds north of the Platte and along the Smoky Hill River. Secondly, they wanted guns and ammunition. Thirdly, they asked that traders be sent into the Indian country.

General Sherman replied on the next day for the Commission. The bluff, red-bearded General had never been noted for tact and diplomacy and he displayed none now. "Roads will be built through your country and you must not interfere with them," he told the chiefs. "We will give peaceful Indians almost anything they want, but the rest of you must work with your bows and arrows till you satisfy us you will not kill our people."

No approving *"Hou-hous"* greeted Sherman's speech. The chiefs reminded the white men that their treaties had been consistently violated. Hunting grounds had been promised them and then taken away. One chief declared, "Ever since I have been born I have eaten wild meat. My father and grandfather ate wild meat before me. *We cannot give up quickly the customs of our fathers."*

To which General Sherman replied: "A great many agreements have been made by people gone before us . . . but I am afraid they did not make allowance for the rapid growth of the white race . . . You cannot stop the locomotive any more than you can stop the sun or moon, and you must submit and do the best you can . . . Our people East hardly think of what you call war here, but if they make up their minds to fight you, they will come out as thick as a herd of buffalo, and if you continue fighting you will all be killed . . . This Commission is not only a Peace Commission, but it is a War Commission also."

The impact of Sherman's bristling remarks was aggravated by the fact that neither he nor any of his colleagues had brought any presents for their red guests. This was a shocking breach of frontier etiquette. Thinking it over, the assembled chiefs and warriors became so annoyed that they put on a threatening demonstration. Arms and ammunition were hastily delivered to them, and they departed in such a pleasant mood that Taylor could report to Washington the council ended in a "perfect agreement." A perfect agreement on what, the Commissioner neglected to add.

The Commission moved on to Fort Laramie, where they waited in vain for Chief Red Cloud to come in and sign a treaty. The Sioux Chief Swift Bear met them there and, after haranguing them about the promises made to the Indians in the past, announced that Red Cloud was too busy hunting to come in to Laramie. The Chief would see them "maybeso next summer." The disgruntled Commission proceeded by way of Fort Larned, Kansas, to a great council with the southern tribes on Medicine Lodge Creek in late October of 1867.

CONTACT with the hostile Sioux was established in the spring of 1868. The Indians were presented with a paper known as the Treaty of Laramie. It set apart as a great Sioux reservation all the land "from the north line of the state of Nebraska to the 46th parallel, bounded on the east by the Missouri River, to the 104th degree of longitude on the west." That vast region constituted the entire portion of South Dakota west of the Missouri River. The Treaty paper further contained this interesting phrase: "And the same is set apart for the absolute and undisturbed use and occupation of the Indians herein named." The conditions went on to promise a complete set of Agency buildings, a saw mill, a grist mill, and shingle mill; and to "provide Agent, officers and employees as shall be necessary. Any Indian who desires to settle down to farming is permitted to select 320 acres of land if he be the head of a family . . ." The Treaty went on to promise clothing for all and education for the children . . . "And each family which settles down to farming is to receive a good American cow and a pair of good American oxen . . . The United States expressly agrees and stipulates that the country north of the North Platte River and east of the summits of the Big Horn Mountains shall be held and considered to be unceded Indian territory, and also stipulates and agrees that no white person or persons shall be permitted to settle upon or occupy any portion of the same, or without the consent of the Indians first having been obtained, to pass through the same; and the United States further agrees that within ninety days after the conclusion of peace with all the bands of the Sioux Nation, the military posts now established in the territory shall be abandoned and that the road leading to them and by them to the settlements in the territory of Montana shall be closed."

The Indians, on their part, agreed to withdraw all opposition to the construction of railroads and wagon roads south of the North Platte. A condition of the Treaty stipulated that "no part of the reservation herein described shall be ceded unless three-fourths of all the adult male Indians agreed to and signed the Treaty."

Twenty-four chiefs, including Spotted Tail, signed the Treaty on April 29. By June 1 more than one hundred chiefs and warriors had "touched the pen" to the paper. Red Cloud himself sent word that he would not sign until the forts in the Powder River country had been abandoned and the roads closed. On August 27 the Government conceded to Red Cloud's demand, withdrawing all troops from Forts Phil Kearney, C. F. Smith, and Reno. Watching from the hills, Red Cloud sent braves to fire the forts. When the destruction was complete, the Chief sent another messenger to the Peace Commission that he would not come in to sign the paper until the fall hunting was done and the winter meat supply assured.

At long last, at the head of a large band of subchiefs and warriors, Red Cloud appeared at Fort Laramie. He "touched the pen" to the Treaty on November 6, 1868; his followers doing the same. The Treaty was ratified by the Senate on February 16, 1869, and was proclaimed by President Johnson on February 24. "Red Cloud's War" was the only war ever lost by the Government and military forces of the United States.

(To be Continued in Next Issue)

Little Crow, a Sioux Chief and leader of the Indian Massacre of 1862 in Minnesota.

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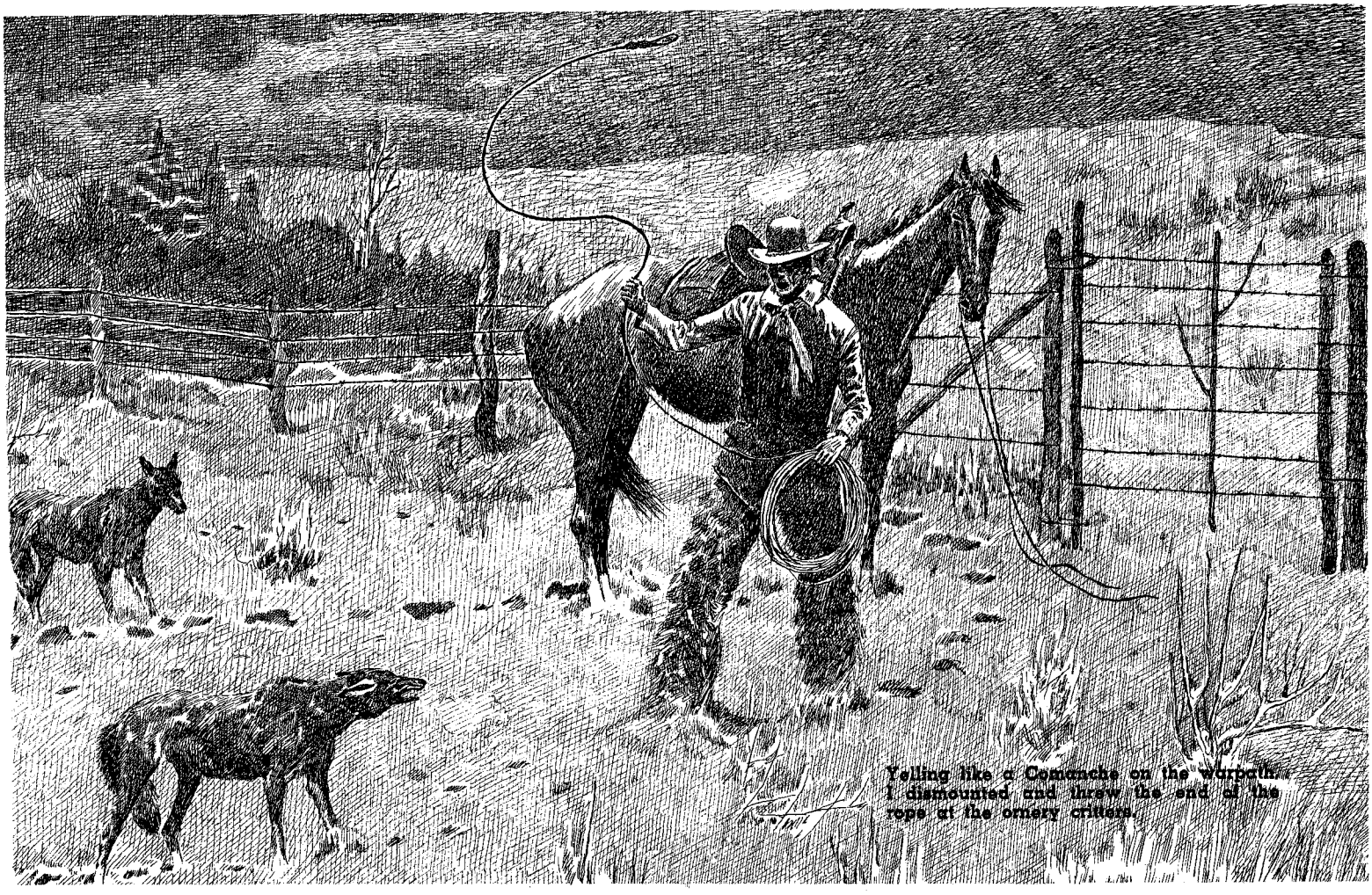

Yelling like a Comanche on the warpath, I dismounted and threw the end of the rope at the ornery critters.

I Spent Christmas On A Horse

BY FAYE E. SMITH

Illustrated by B. D. Tittsworth

It was a tragic message the rider brought to the lonely ranch house in the blizzard-swept Laramie Mountains. But *somebody* had to carry it . . . . .

THE wolves on my trail were getting closer. My horse was tired, his fastest gait was a slow walk. I was facing the blizzard; it was bitterly cold. Coming up the canyon, it was tough going for my pony—about a foot of snow and all uphill.

It was Christmas Day in the year 1911. I was riding at that time with the Diamond Ranch cowboys, home ranch near Bosler, Wyoming. That morning a telegram had arrived at the tiny telegraph office on the Union Pacific Railroad, addressed to Tom Moore.

Tom was a homesteader who had taken up a claim at Sybille Springs—pronounced Sabeel—fifteen miles east over in the Laramie Mountains. The message stated that Tom's mother in Iowa was dead. The telegraph operator got someone to go to our ranch and ask for a rider to deliver the telegram. There were no telephones in that country then; no automobiles, either.

I volunteered, for the message just had to be delivered. This was hard to do, for the bunkhouse was warm and cheerful. We had a big wood pile and nobody was too lazy to feed the fire. Our only work on Christmas Day was to fork out hay for the stock. No cows to milk; we used canned milk—on a ranch with hundreds of cows! We riders wouldn't even fix a fence; there was a "chore-boy" to do that. We had a real high-class outfit, including a saddle-maker to repair saddles and harness and a blacksmith to keep our horses shod.

The ranch manager had invited us to dinner in the big house, and we knew he'd pour a drink in honor of the occasion. There was a wash tub of hot water on the floor and a pot heating up on the stove, and we punchers were busy bathing, shaving, and trying to find clean shirts. Then the message arrived, and a sober pall dropped over us.

I took my top horse to make the ride. He was a bronc, but—as he had a bit of hot blood—he was long-legged and handy in deep snow. I dressed warm; long woolen underwear, heavy mackinaw pants, flannel shirt, saddle-length fur-lined coat, angora fur chaps. My tailor-made boots were slick leather-lined—that double leather added warmth. I also had a pair of high-heeled overshoes which fitted the cowboy boots. (The low, flat heels some men wear now had not been invented. We wore two-inch underslung heels, which would keep a rider's foot from going through the stirrup if a horse fell.)

I owned a good six-shooter, a .32-20 caliber Bisley model single-action Colt with a 7½ inch barrel. In those days we wore guns not so much for protection against men as for use on animals. A man could get into trouble with his rope, when alone, if he tied onto a critter that was too big and his horse was jerked down. Also, there were bears, wolves, coyotes, and rattlesnakes. But I didn't figure to have any trouble this trip, so I left the gun in the bunkhouse—that much less weight for the horse to carry. Right there I made a bad boner.

I had to first cross the Laramie Plains for ten miles upgrade to the pass at the western edge of the mountains. There I would enter the canyon that led down

(Continued on page 34)

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He seized his spade and hacked off the head of that mezcla man with his wide-open mouth.

the mezcla man

BY J. FRANK DOBIE

From Tales of Old-Time Texas,
Published by Little, Brown & Company

ELOJIO JUAREZ of the Rancho de Los Olmos and I were riding in the big pasture of open hills on the south side of the Nueces River. He knew all that country as intimately as any of the thousands of deer and javelinas knew the trails through their own thickets. Its traditions had come down to him through generations of vaquero people. He was quiet and had laughing eyes, and no better vaquero ever roped an outlaw Brahma steer in the chaparral.

Fine September rains had fallen that year. Calves, tails stretched out were running in circles around their grazing mothers. Bulls had mats of mud on their heads from butting gully banks. Our horses seemed to feel as fresh and free as the white-tailed deer showing us their flags as they bounded into the mesquites. Elojio and I felt fresh and free too. When we came up on a high ridge where we looked across the San Casimero—20,000 acres in one pasture—to the Casa Blanca hills, toward San Diego, we instinctively stopped and got down on the green-turfed ground. Elojio rolled a shuck cigarette, I filled my pipe, and the horses went to chopping off mouthfuls of mesquite grass.

"Know you," Elojio said, "that all this land down the Nueces and far to the south used to be in sheep?"

"I have heard so," I answered.

"There was the *brasada,*" he went on, "but between the thickets was all prairie, where mustangs ran and the flocks of sheep moved slow and white, like clouds from the Gulf of Mexico with morning sunshine on them. It was the time of rich, rich *hacendados* and poor *pastores*"—the owners of haciendas and peonized sheepherders.

And then, for we were in no more of a hurry than the floating Gulf clouds, Elojio told this story.

THERE were no banks in the country then, and so when the rich rancheros sold their wool and sheep, they brought the money home. It was gold, with some silver. They had secret holes in the rock walls of their houses for hiding away the money. Often they buried it in the floor. The floors were of dirt cemented with bull blood to make it hard. They had secret places for gold under the fire-

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He was a stubborn man, the rich old rancher. Even the strangling rope of the bandidos could not make him reveal the secret hiding place of his gold

Illustrated by Clay McGaughy

place rocks. Sometimes they put it in holes outside the houses, maybe close to the corrals. There were many places to hide the gold.

There were robbers, too, who came down from the north, and bandits who raided up from the other side of the Rio Grande. And always there were the Indians, the Comanches and the Lipans, but they were not after gold; they took horses and children and girls.

Now, one ranchero had more sheep and more wool and more *pastores* and *vacieros* than any other. Each *vaciero* superintended several shepherds and kept them supplied with food, for they could never leave their flocks. This old rich ranchero had more gold also than any other man, and he was very cunning. He lived in the high hills of the Casa Blanca country west of San Diego. His house was a kind of fort, with walls higher than the flat roof and loopholes in the walls to shoot through. He kept a guard up there on the roof day and night.

One time after he had sold thousands of sheep and had conducted a caravan of carts loaded with wool to San Antonio, he brought home more gold than he had ever had before. But now instead of hiding it in his house, he carried it in secret to the highest hill on his ranch. It was not far from the house. People still call it Cerro del Rico—Hill of the Rich One. On the upper slopes of this hill and on top of it black chaparral and catsclaw and other thorned brush grew so dense a javalina could hardly squeeze through it. The top of the hill was flat; perhaps it still is, and here in the middle of the thicket was a small natural clearing. The trail up to this clearing was very dim and thorny, for hardly anybody but the wildcats ever traveled it.

THE cunning old *rico* knew it though. He went up alone with his gold. It must have been right after a rain, for he found mud. There in the middle of the clearing he made a great big man out of *mezcla,* which is a mixture of mud and straw or little sticks, the same as adobe. Big sticks supported the legs and neck and arms of the *mezcla* man. He was as big as a giant, and he was natural like a picture. His head was thrown back, and his mouth was wide open. He stood with his arms stretched to the east and to the west, and across his chest was this writing:

DIG OUT TO THE EAST AND THE WEST THE WAY MY HANDS ARE POINTING AND YOU WILL FIND THE GOLD

Oh, but this *mezcla* man was strange-looking, and his stomach was so big that anybody who looked at him would have to laugh. Perhaps Sancho Panza looked like him.

After the cunning old *rico* had finished making the *mezcla* man there in the middle of the thicket on top of the hill where nobody ever went, and had written on his breast that waybill to find the gold, he kept his secret. He raised more sheep and the shearers sheared more wool for him and he got more gold and hid it. All he paid out was coppers. He was like two millstones grinding out gold from the people under him and around him. They say that when he snored at night his snores said, *"Mas oro, mas oro."*

Then one night while he was snoring for "more gold, more gold," the bandits came as quietly as the owl flies and choked the guards before they could shoot or cry out and went into the snoring room. They grasped the cunning old *rico* while he was still on his back.

"Your gold," the chief of the bandits said.

"There is none," the *rico* replied.

"You had better say," the *bandido* said.

"There is none," the *rico* repeated. That is all he would say.

"Hang him," the chief of the *bandidos* ordered.

The others tied his hands behind him and took a hair rope, so that it would not cut his skin too much, and noosed him by the neck. Then they drew the other end of the rope over a beam and pulled him up until his feet were kicking nothing but air. When he went to breathing like a lassoed wild horse choking down, they lowered him.

"What is the name of the dance you were doing for us?" one of the bandits laughed.

The *rico* said nothing.

"Now say where the gold is," the leader ordered.

"There is none."

"One more chance you have," the leader said.

"There is none."

"All right," the leader cried, "hang him up again."

Again he danced and again he strangled, but the dance was weaker and the sound of the little air passing through the tight noose was shriller. The bandits let him down again.

"For the last time," the bandit chief said, "I ask where is the gold."

The *rico* was purple in the face and coughing, but he wheezed out, "There is none."

"May you go with God!" one bandit called as he tightened his hand on the rope to pull.

"And all you to the *infierno,"* the *rico* gasped back.

"That's where you will snore now for more gold," another bandit taunted.

After the *rico's* legs had made their last jerk, the taunter observed, "He loved his gold better than his life."

"It was his pride that he loved," the bandit chief said—"even better than the Holy Virgin."

THEN all went to searching. They looked in his bed and under his bed and all the other beds, paying no attention to the crying women and children. They got bars and dug into the floors and pried up rocks of the fireplaces. They found the store of candles and had the rooms all lit up while they tapped and hammered on the walls searching for secret little holes fitted with money boxes. They pried up the lid of the big leather chest. They looked everywhere there was to look inside the house and found not one piece of gold, but they knew plenty of it was somewhere.

When daylight came they went to digging holes at certain places under mesquite trees and around the big corral. They were many and well armed, and they impressed all the *peones* to dig for them. They were as cunning as the old *rico* himself, and some rode around looking for signs. One found the trail going up through the brush on that hill and followed it and came to the *mezcla* man. He could not read the writing on the *mezcla* man's breast, but he knew it meant something. He came back yelling, "Now it is found, now it is found."

All the bandits went up the hill. The leader read out aloud the words on the *mezcla* man's breast: "Dig out to the east and the west the way my hands are pointing, and you will find the gold." What joy they had! Quickly they dug under the hands of the *mezcla* man, but the packed earth had never been softened by digging. The directions did not say how far out to dig, and now the bandits ran east and west the way the hands pointed, looking for likely places to dig. Perhaps it is here, perhaps it is there, perhaps it is over yonder. They dug and dug. They were in a hurry, not only from eagerness for the gold but from knowledge that before long honest people would find out about the murder of the *rico,* a very important man, and begin trailing them down.

With all the travel up and down the hill, from digging to water and food and from water and food to digging, the trail became as plain as the road to Laredo. On the afternoon of the second day the bandits heard horses galloping. They left the country.

WHEN the ranchmen who were after the bandits came to the thicket and saw the strange *mezcla* man and read that writing on his breast, they forgot all about murder and justice. They thought only of finding the gold. Nobody was after them, and so they could dig as deep and as far out as they wanted to. They would sight along the *mezcla* man's shoulders and along his arms and out his forefinger and

(Continued on page 40)

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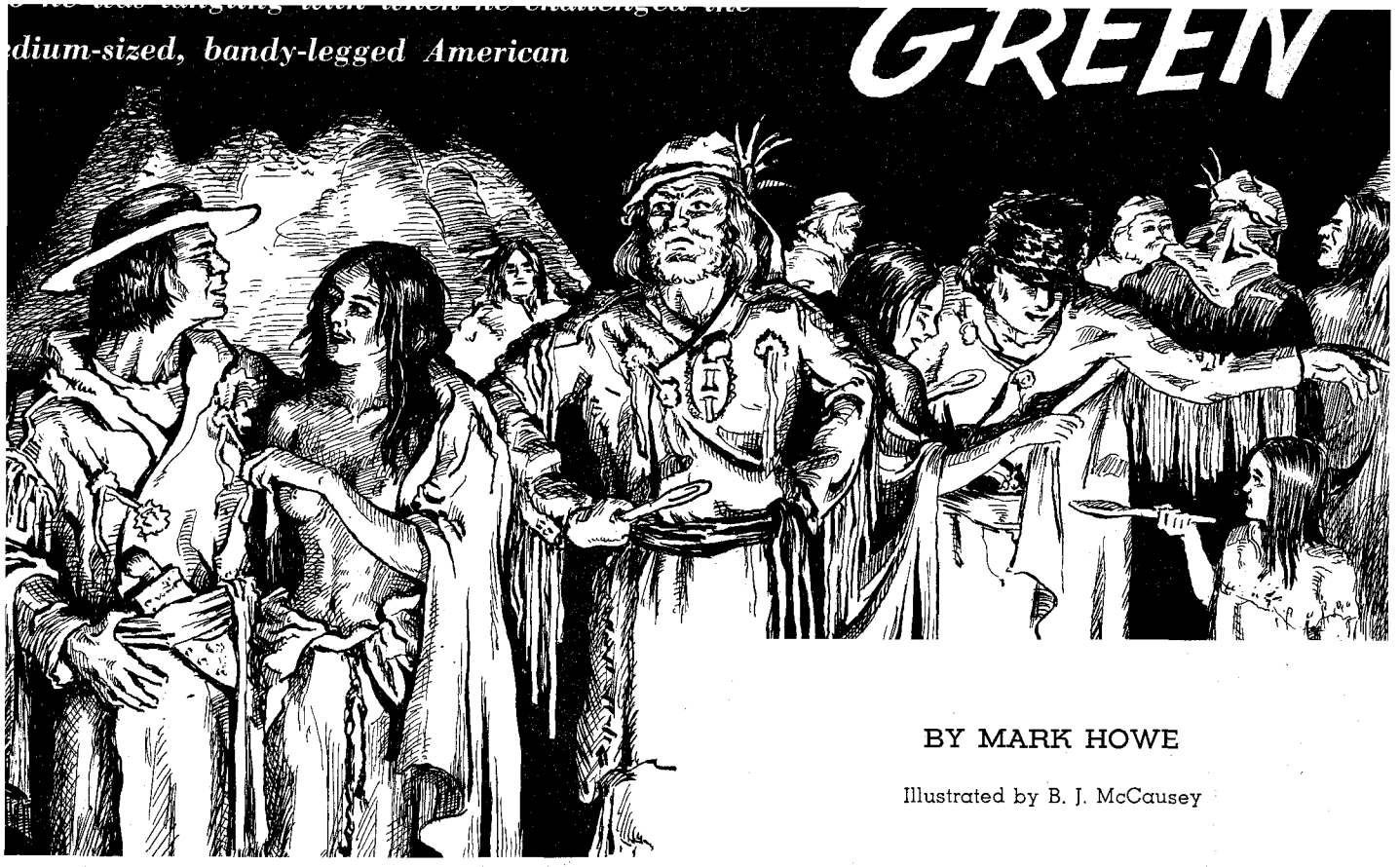

BY MARK HOWE

Illustrated by B. J. McCausey

THE 1835 trappers' rendezvous on Green River, in present Wyoming, was an uproarious affair. The previous trapping season had been a first-class one, which meant that nearly everybody was well heeled. The Rocky Mountain Fur Company had brought along a goodly supply of that corroding, mind-shattering brand of whisky known as Taos Lightning. In addition, old Chief Running Around and a large band of Arapaho Indians had arrived. Among them were many maidens whose girlish hearts were quickly turned topsy-turvy by the hot, bold eyes of the Mountain Men.

Liquor, beaver, and coquettish young squaws—a combination that spelled dynamite any time on the frontier.

As soon as the Arapahoes set up their buffalo-hide tepees a quarter of a mile above the rendezvous, things began to hum. The kick-off was the popular Soup Dance. The trappers, as fond of this provocative pastime as the young Indian braves, boldly took over the dance, unceremoniously thrusting the Indians aside and compelling them to play the part of sullen spectators. Being in the minority, the angry warriors could neither throw the Mountain Men out of camp nor prevent their sisters and sweethearts from dancing with them.

Each night, therefore, the gay squaws dressed in their best clothes, painted their faces in the gaudiest of colors, and made the visitors from the rendezvous welcome. When all were ready, two lines were formed; trappers on one side, squaws on the other, facing inward. Between them were kettles of soup, and each squaw held a large horn spoon in her hand. When the drums began to throb, each maiden, after dipping her spoon in the nearest kettle, danced coyly toward the trappers. To the favored one she artfully extended her spoon, then ran back to her own line, followed by the man. This teasing procedure was repeated again and again until she allowed him to drink from the spoon. Then she ran—not too fast nor too far—with her admirer in pursuit. When he overtook her, he enveloped her in the folds of his blanket and the serious love-making began. Next day he gave her a present in return for her favors. If, on the other hand, she spurned a man's advances, she threw the soup in his face during the dance.

UNTIL the trappers barged in, the Soup Dance was strictly decorous, according to age-old Indian standards. After that, it was anything but decorous by anybody's standards! The Mountain Men introduced several innovations, all of which the young squaws highly approved. Not the least of these was hearty kissing, white man fashion—a stimulating substitute for gentle touching of noses, Arapaho style.

The party was whooping up splendidly when medium-sized, bandy-legged Kit Carson rode into the rendezvous at the head of his own party of free trappers. First, business-like as always, Kit sold his furs and bought his supplies for the next season. These necessary transactions completed, he looked about for entertainment. There were the usual gambling games going full-blast, but these were not for Kit. Bored, he was thinking of heading back for his trapping grounds, when somebody told him about the Soup Dance in the nearby Arapaho camp. That night he rode upriver to Running Around's camp to see what it was all about.

The dance was in full swing when he arrived. A casual glance told him the merry pastime had degenerated greatly since he had last seen it on the Arkansas River; that was evident from the behavior of the trappers. Most boisterous of the lot was a huge French-Canadian named Shunan, whom the Indians called "Bad Medicine." He laughed drunkenly, roared like a bull, and put his great hairy paws upon whatever woman suited his fancy. No one dared to interfere, for he had already killed several men who angered him. When he grew tired of one maiden's kisses, he thrust her roughly aside to grab another, regardless of whose partner she was.

"By Gar, I wan' thees woman! Get out!" he bellowed. And the unlucky man slunk away without a word of protest.

Not long after Kit arrived, Shunan seized a comely young squaw named Waa-nibe, or Grass Singing, Running Around's daughter. She struggled fiercely to free herself from the trapper's bear-like arms. She fought him like a cornered wild creature, sought to scratch out his eyes, and finally managed to break away. Down the river bank she fled, with the French-Canadian in hot pursuit. Bent upon escape, she easily eluded him in the dense willows bordering the stream. When Shunan came back, angry and panting from the chase, the trappers laughed at him.

KIT CARSON laughed loudest of all, and freely spoke his opinion of any man who would deliberately insult a woman, "even a pore ignorat Injun." Somebody warned him who the big French-Canadian was, and what he had done to several men since coming to the rendezvous.

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"Wal, now!" drawled Kit, "that's all plumb interestin'. Busted up the biggest men in camp, did he? And still he ain't man enough to make a leetle 'Rapaho squaw come! She's got too much ginger for an ugly old he-coon like him."

Next day Waa-nibe, in company with a girl friend, rode her white pony down to the rendezvous. Kit watched her riding artlessly along, naked to the waist after the fashion of her people, her glossy black hair drawn back in two braids, with a becoming touch of vermilion at the temples. And she noticed *him,* not once or twice, but several times. That, however, he did not know.

That night Kit was at the Arapaho village long before the lines formed for the Soup Dance. When it started, he planted himself, wrapped in his blanket, directly opposite Waa-nibe. To his deep chagrin she danced up to almost anyone in the line but him. Could it be that his medium height and bandy legs marked him in her sight as something less than a man?

"Wagh!" he growled. "I'll show her a thing or two before the rendezvous is over."

At long last she relented. The drums throbbed in a compelling rhythm. Now she danced slowly toward him, her great black eyes looking directly into his. Nearer and nearer she came. By all that was sacred, she was going to let him drink from her spoon this time! Kit, young and ardent, forgot time, place and everything else. He and the dark, vivacious Arapaho maid existed in a world apart.

Suddenly, the magic spell upon Kit was broken by a violent shove; someone had rammed into him viciously from behind. "Get out, bowlegged American runt!" bellowed a heavy voice. "Thees is *my* woman. Let her look at a *real* man."

Knocked off balance by the unexpected shove, Kit staggered to one side. His blanket fell from his shoulders to the ground. Dazed, he stooped and picked it up. When he stood erect again, his head was clear. He took two steps, and was standing again in his place, his body pressed against Shunan's great bulk.

The French-Canadian snarled, half-turned, and doubled his hairy fists. He glared with bloodshot eyes at the youth who dared to do what no other man had dared in years.

"Sacre enfant de garce—" he began, then stopped.

Something in Kit Carson's blue eyes paralyzed his foul tongue.

"Air ye talkin' to me, Shunan?" inquired Kit mildly.

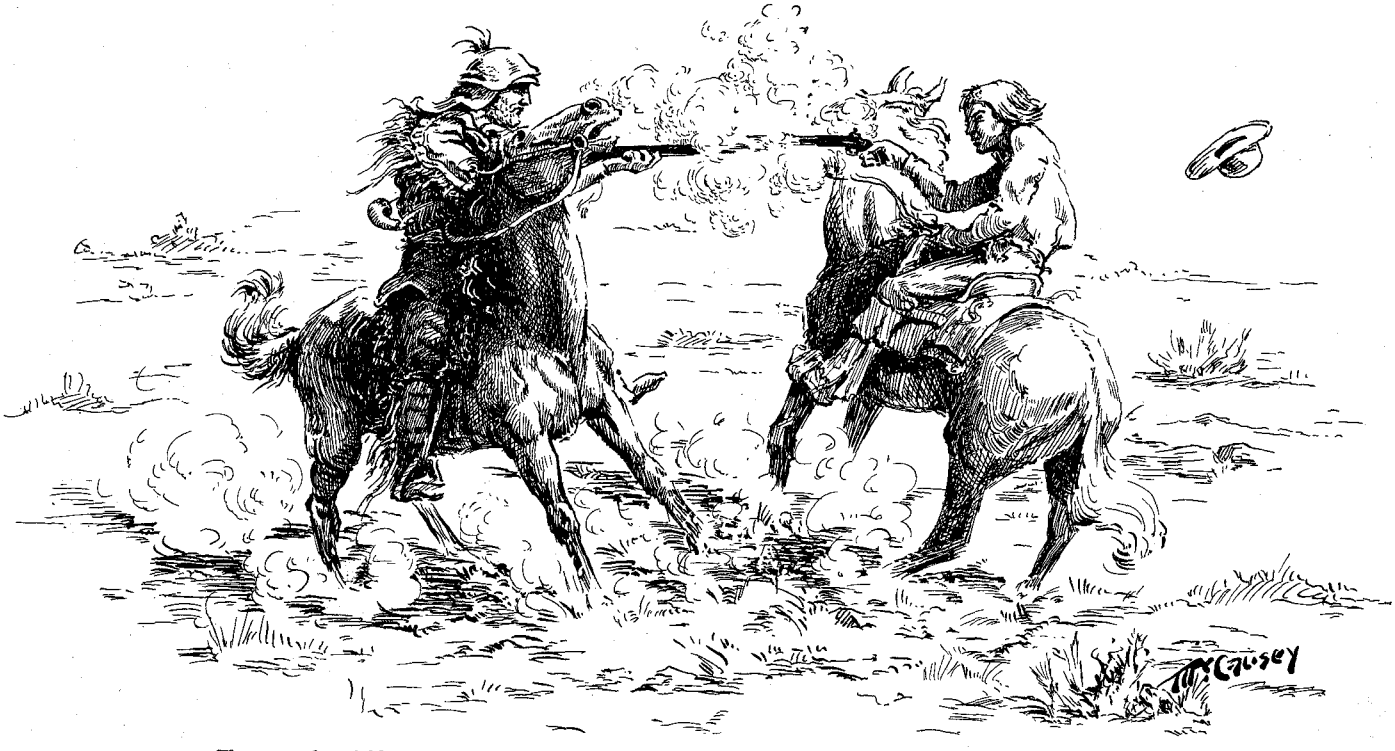
The mild question restored Shunan's power of speech. *"Oui,* by Gar!" he exploded with a show of his usual arrogance. "I wan' thees woman."

"Shore, you can have her," agreed Kit smoothly, *"if* she chooses you. If she chooses me, I take her. Savvy?"

Shunan cursed in his red beard and turned leering eyes upon Waa-nibe. She backed away from him in alarm. Kit looked at her, pleadingly. When nothing more happened, the girl danced toward the two white men again; nearer and nearer. Shunan could bear the suspense no longer. Bellowing like a buffalo bull, he reached out his great arms to seize her. Waa-nibe leaped nimbly to one side and flung both soup and spoon into his face.

Then she stepped close to Kit and lifted her face to receive the white man's kiss. Lowering his head, he brushed her lips tenderly with his own. Then, wrapping his blanket around her slender figure, Kit led her from the circle of firelight into the shadows. Stupefied, Shunan watched them go.

(Continued on page 36)



The muzzle of Shunan's rifle shifted. "Sacre bleu!" he snarled. Rifle and pistol spoke together.

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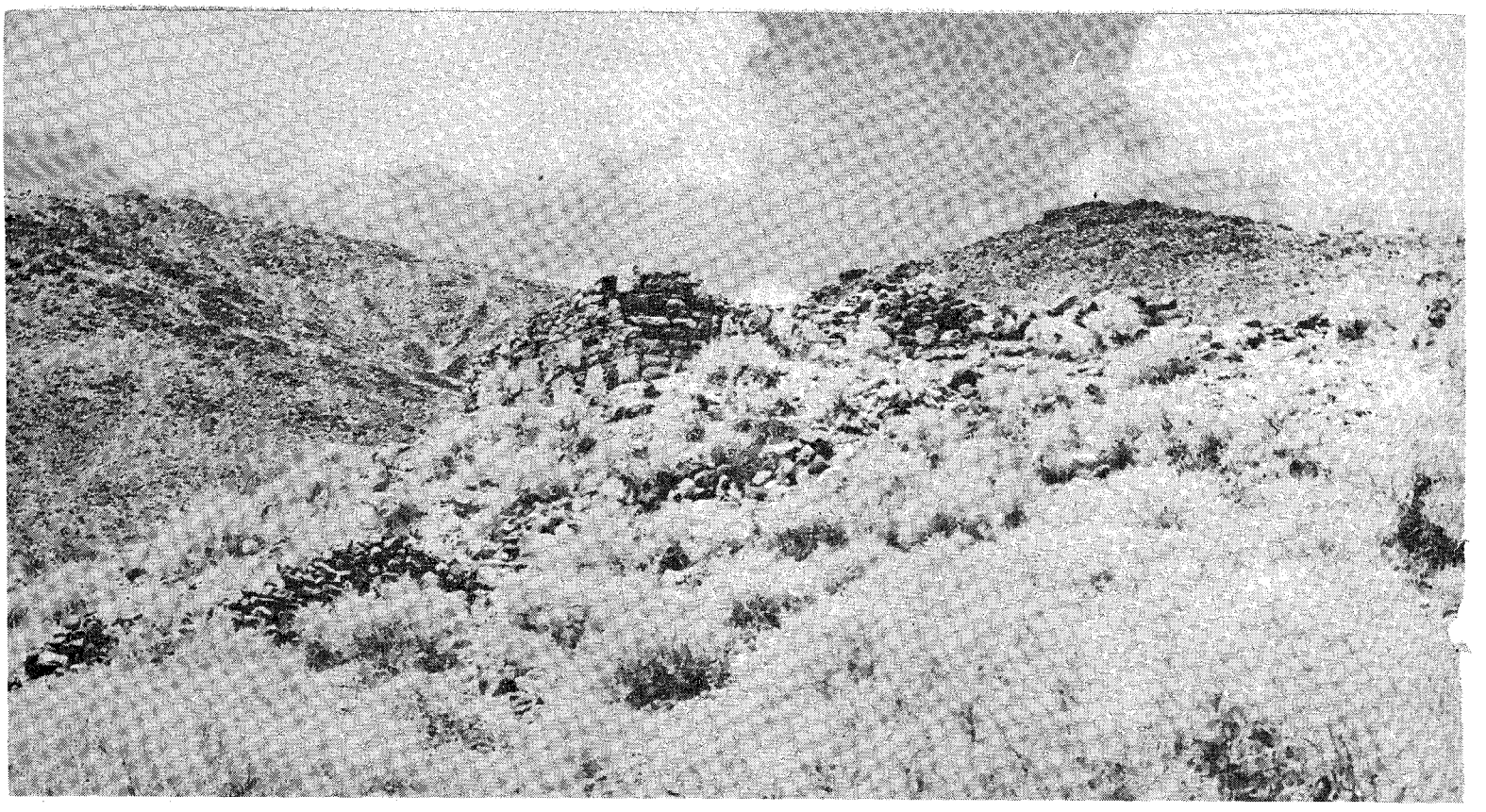

Ruins of Fort Piute. Rock wall in foreground leads to corral.

Here and there across the West you may still see them — the old military posts that once guarded the frontier. Here's the story of

Forgotten Fort Piute

BY JIM BLACKTON

Photos courtesy N. Curtis Armstrong & San Bernardino Sun-Telegram

THE MOST well preserved of the many small forts erected by the army to protect the wagon trail between Winslow, Arizona, and San Bernardino, California, during the Indian wars lies almost forgotten just across the California line about twenty miles southwest of Searchlight, Nevada.

Known variously as Ft. Beale, Piute Hill, and finally Ft. Piute, it owes its remarkable state of preservation to three factors. Instead of the usual adobe construction of that era it was made of solid rock which has defied vandals and the elements since about 1867.

Thirty years ago a flash flood destroyed the old government road from the fort to U. S. Highway 95. Later the original trail from Piute Springs to Lanfair was washed out. Neither was reconstructed.

Lastly, the land upon which the old fort stands was acquired by Mr. and Mrs. Geo. G. Irwin. Since 1941 they have diligently defended it against vandals and souvenir hunters. Had it not been for these three factors the fort would have undoubtedly been stripped to its foundations despite the fact that what remains of the road is not safe for the low slung cars of today. A jeep or high axle clearance pick-up is needed to negotiate the distance from the privately owned power line road to the fort.

Ft. Piute is much more elaborate than its companion posts at Rock Springs, Resting Springs or Marl Springs. The main building paces off about sixty-five by forty-five feet; the rock walls pierced by loopholes about every five feet. A cannon embrasure covers the trail approach. The fireplace in the largest of the three rooms is in excellent condition. The writer's wife broiled steaks on it.

The horse corral is rock walled, and a wall between it and the fort protected men and stock from arrow and rifle fire. Cleverly constructed rock picket posts surround the fort in a ring varying from fifty to a hundred yards out. Not many soldiers could have been scalped with protection like this!

The fort's water supply was a fine spring, which is still bubbling cheerily. A dam near the fort has created a lovely pool of clear, cool water sixteen feet deep.

Another interesting feature of the area is the large numbers of Indian petroglyphs found on the rocks. These Indian rock writings vary from very old to some which have been done within the last hundred years. The writer saw at least two which had been partially worked over after the original story was told. Edited, no doubt, by a younger generation!

Due to the almost total absence of records concerning most of these old forts and outposts, very little is known about them; but a "find" a few years ago may prove to be a bonanza to historians. Ft. Mohave, near Yuma, Arizona, was headquarters post for the string of forts from Winslow to San Bernardino.

WHEN Ft. Mohave was abandoned as an army post, it was turned into an Indian school. A few years ago it was abandoned entirely and the land

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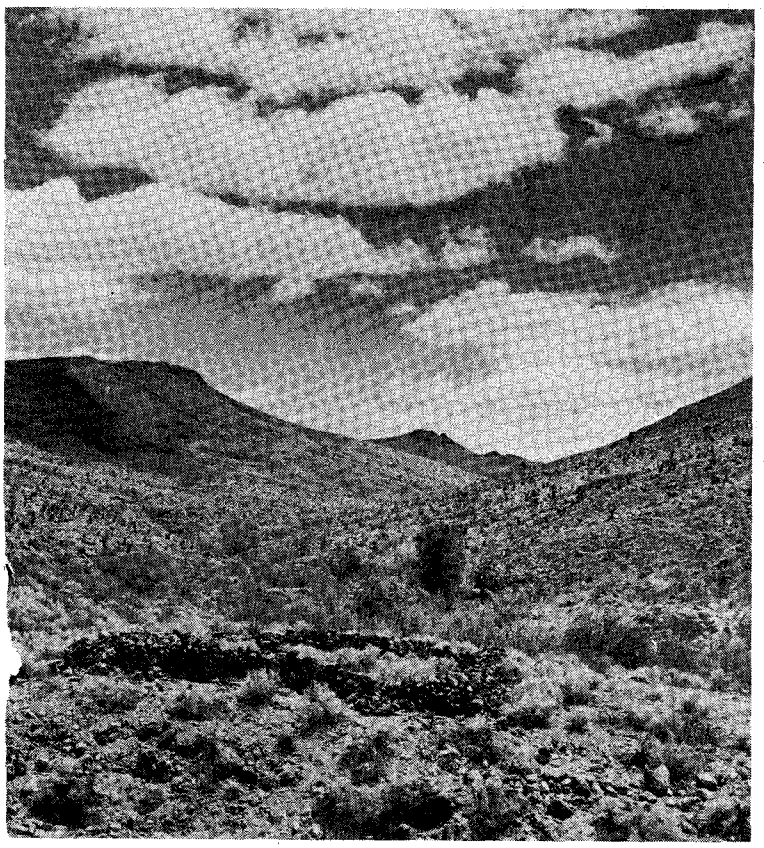
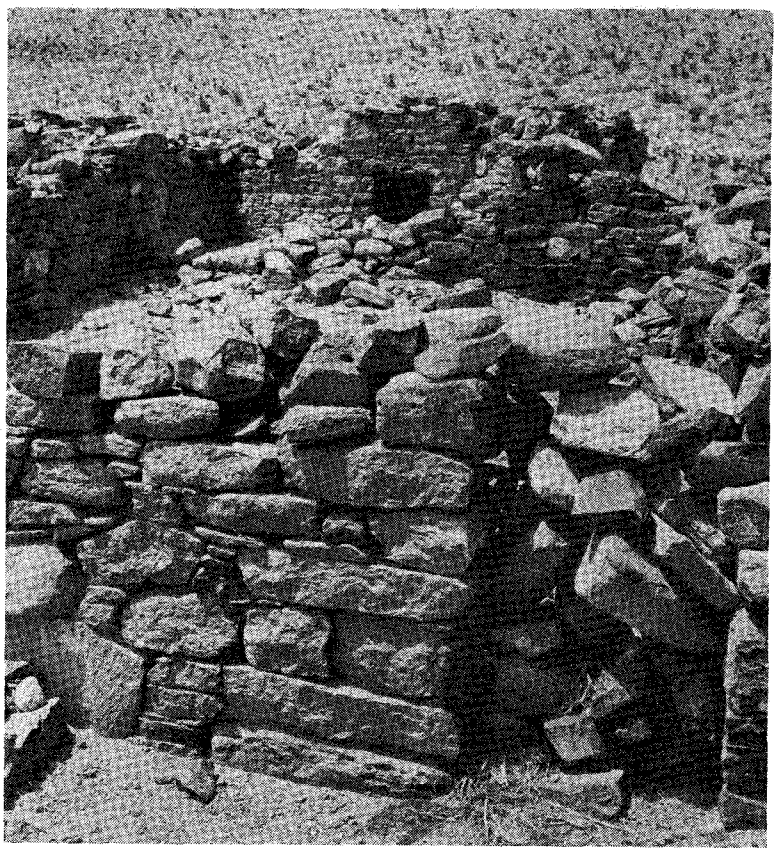




Left: Remnants of rock walled stock corral at the Fort. Right: Main room of Fort Piute. Doorway in right foreground has been filled in.

given back to agriculture. A bulldozer started to knock down the old adobe walls and it fell into a cellar which had been covered by several feet of earth. The cellar contained many boxes of records evidently overlooked when the fort was abandoned. Placed in line the boxes measured twenty-seven feet long. Plenty of red tape even along the old frontier!

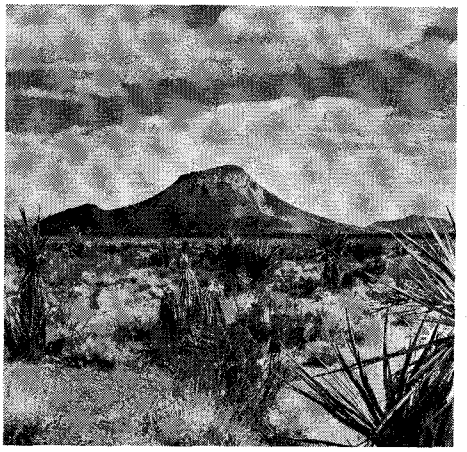
These old records were appropriated by the army and sent to Washington, instead of being released to museums and historical societies. Top secret, no doubt! If and when these documents are released for study, historians should have a field day.

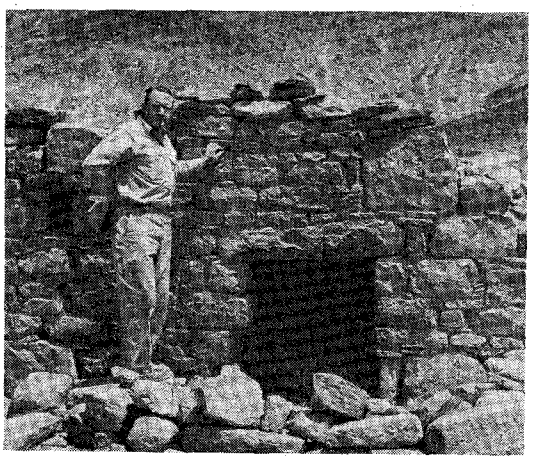
A famous Indian battle took place not far from Ft. Piute. This was strictly an Indian affair. The whites were not involved. After the battle a most unusual treaty was signed by the participants.

A strong party of Navajos attacked the Piutes near The Willows. Unknown to the belligerents a war party of the fierce Apaches was nearby. The Apache scouts heard the din caused by the fray and dashed back to their main body. Approaching cautiously, the Apaches viewed the battle from concealment. Just as the Navajos seemed to be winning, the Apaches charged down the hill and licked both the Navajos and Piutes.

Under the terms of the treaty the Apaches won hunting privileges in the area—which was actually Piute territory. The Apaches could hunt and eat anything which ran on the earth, grew in the earth, flew in the air, or swam in the river. The Navajos, who came off second best, could hunt and eat everything which flew, swam or grew. The lowly Piutes, who lost out all around, could eat only that which swam.

Old-timers around Searchlight and Needles will tell you the treaty is still being enforced. If a brave swaggers into a restaurant, studies the menu, and loudly orders steak—he is an Apache. If a mild-mannered Indian sidles in and asks for fish—he's a Piute!





Above Left: Members of covered wagon trains from Winslow cheered when this hill came in sight. It meant safety, water, shade, food, and rest. They had made Fort Piute! Above Right: George G. Irwin, present owner of Fort Piute property, standing by Fort's fireplace. Notice loophole just to his left. Below Left: A genuine Indian Road Marker shows winding trail used by Indians and indicates the Fort's spring. The Fort itself is indicated at the top. Below Right: Remains of small room in Fort—possibly commanding officer's quarters.

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Christmas In A Canyon

BY J. C. TOLMAN

A fascinating Yuletide glimpse of the Old West of long ago

EDITOR'S NOTE: Surveyors have been in the van of every American frontier but relatively few of them have left written records of their work and way of life, other than field notes. The following vivid account of the experiences of a surveying party on the Texas Plains in 1887 is taken, at the suggestion of Dr. Walter Prescott Webb, from The Texaco Star, December, 1925, with the permission of The Texas Company.

SAID WATT: "Bill, I done gathered all the buffeler chips offen four sections around this here camp and I ain't goin' no further. If you cain't make out to cook two meals with this here cord of 'em, I guess we-all will go hungry."

"Umph," said Bill.

"Yeah," remarked Watt, "I know this here gol-darned drizzle-drazzle done made the sap rise in the chips an' it's hard to get a het on the ovens; but it's forty miles to the nearest brush an' God knows how far to a tree, an' my back is done give out totin' chips."

"Bosh!" said Bill, as he lifted the top of a dutch-oven to take a look at the biscuits in which he took so much pride. They were always light and delectable when he could get a proper "het" on his ovens.

"Lordy, Bill!" exclaimed Watt, "I never seen you make such biscuits. Them looks to me as though they had squat to rise and baked on the squat."

Bill threw a poker at him, which he neatly dodged and it nearly hit Bill's pet wildcat. Kitty spat irritably and lit on the top of the chuck-wagon, his perch in time of trouble.

Presently Watt said: "I hear the line-wagon about a mile off, comin' fast."

Presently Dave and Martin rode up, unsaddled and fed their ponies. By that time the line-wagon reached camp and both of the chainmen helped Sebe unharness and feed.

Presently the Major ambled up on "Old Sideways," the hip-shot cayuse provided by a rich corporation for this particular topographer. The surveying party was complete and hungry, as usual.

Bill pounded a three-foot iron pipe with a poker and eight members of a pioneer surveying party gathered around a table made of two boards and situated near the N.W. corner of Block No. 7, I. G. N. R.R. Co. Survey, in the Panhandle of Texas, the time being late in the year 1887.

That was only seventy years ago; just the allotted Biblical span of a man's life, a brief flicker of time hardly to be considered in the life of a nation. But consider:

IN 1887, between No-Man's Land on the north, the Palo Duro on the south, the Indian Territory on the east, and New Mexico on the west, there were just thirty-six houses outside the town of Mobeetie, Fort Elliott, and a little settlement at Tascosa. Mobeetie was the metropolis of the area and boasted a population of three hundred and fifty humans.

There was no railroad; no graded road; no fence, except small pastures near headquarter ranch houses.

In the "breaks" and canyons one could find objects by which to guide oneself; but on the Llano Estacado there was only a grass-covered plain extending beyond the range of sight. This plain had been the home of the buffalo, and their bones, skulls, and horns could be seen in any direction. Within the next few years, the bone-hunters were to gather these and haul them many miles to be shipped by rail and made into fertilizer. The "buffalo-chip," or dried dung, was the only fuel of the plains as long as it could be found.

At the time of this sketch there were thousands of antelope and many hundreds of mustangs on the plains.

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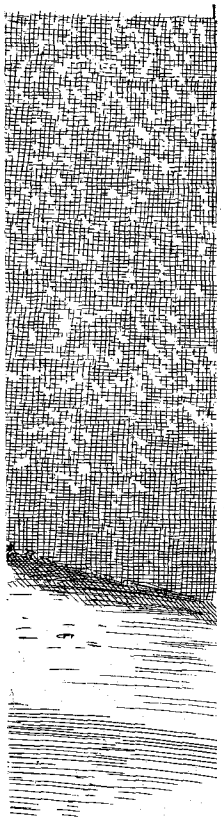

Illustrated by Wm. Loechel

"Prince Charlie" Goodnight had preserved a few buffalo on the J A Ranch on the lower Palo Duro, and few wild herds were reported on the North Plains; but all the rest of the mighty bison herds were dead. It would have been so very easy to have preserved some of them. Also our trees and birds and . . . but we are democratic, and so—

At night the men slept on blanket-rolls on the ground. There is no finer bed for the tired outdoor man. Tents were pitched whenever the weather was unpleasant, but most of the time sleep was in the open. It was a hard but healthy life.

The drizzle ceased some time in the night, and Bill had breakfast ready by daylight. He pounded on his iron pipe with his accursed poker and yelled his matin-song in a hideous voice: "Wake up, snakes! Day's a-breakin'!"

Blessed sleep! Blessings brighten as they take their flight. For many years one of that outfit has thought that old Bill might have developed a gentler method by which to dispel slumber. Well, anyhow, the outfit ceased to sleep and presently was washed and grubbed, and the stock was fed and watered and saddled or hitched; the surveying outfit loaded in the light "line-wagon" and the tents and bedrolls piled near the camp wagons—so that the camp-rustler could load them with the least trouble.

Then the line party started for the point where they had quit work the night before. This was a small mound of sod and was visible for three miles. They reached it betimes and P. G., the Chief, had his transit set and took his first sight almost before the refraction of the sun's early rays ceased to interfere.

DAVE, the front flagman, could lope his pony a half mile and take a sight and not miss the distance more than a few feet. P. G. had Sebe drive him up to the hub and dig up a chunk of sod to mark the spot. By that time P. G. would be ready for a back-sight on Martin's flag and Dave would be ready a half mile ahead. P. G. would set Dave and proceed. Martin would lope gaily up to the piece of sod—which could be seen half a mile—and find his tack-point in time for another sight.

It was lovely and easy for everybody—that is to say everybody who had an easy job. The chain-carriers, of course, had to walk every foot of the line and measure it carefully. If one of them made an error, things would blow up. Somehow the poor devils averaged over seven miles of measured line for each and every day for seven years, and didn't seem to make any appreciable error. Of course they were dull creatures, not tempermental nor given to flights of fancy.

Lines were run and marked to the north as far as the head of McClellan Creek. From a corner on this line another line was traced to the west, and corners established on the area where the town of Amarillo was afterwards started.

Lines were run to the east as far as to the line of the J A Ranch. These lines were over the plains. As far as the eye could see, the corners of sections and blocks could be observed when the atmosphere was not disturbed.

Frequently the mirage played strange tricks on the Llano Estacado. One day near the head of North Fork, we suddenly saw Al Holland driving Beck and Sue—a team of mules—apparently about half a mile away. We thought he would reach us in a few minutes, but they jogged along for half an hour and then faded away. Afterwards it was found that at the time he was nearly twenty miles away.

A few days later P. G. took the outfit to the west line of the X range to meet Mr. Gray, who was to show some corners. When we arrived at the rendezvous, we saw the two black ponies he drove, trotting along with his white canvas-topped buckboard, which we easily recognized. We waited an hour and he seemed no nearer, so we drove to meet him. At about a mile from the rendezvous his outfit very suddenly changed into a white buffalo skull with two black horns. While we stared at it, Mr. Gray suddenly appeared from nowhere in another direction and reached us in a few minutes.

One day we started to run a line south. It was a clear still day and it seemed that visibility was infinite. We could see cattle ahead for miles and there

(Continued on page 30)

The Bunch at Lunch. Left to right: Omohundro, Howard, Poynton, Morris, McCullough, Tolman. This outfit remained in the field for two years. During that time they were never in town and did not see any humans outside of their own party more than a dozen times.

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No tears fell, but Tom's broken heart swelled and hurt as he gently lifted the body of his son.

MUDDY CREEK FEUD

BY GENE SPERRY

A trigger-happy kid squeezed off a shot—and four men died that bloody afternoon

FROM the time Tom Wilson took up several placer mining claims in the Muddy Creek area of Gunnison, Colorado, he and Ed Harper disliked each other intensely.

Wilson finally decided to settle down in the area, after he sold some claims to the Ragged Mountain Placer Mining Company for $3,000. He built a cabin, bought some cattle and began ranching. Hay was a scarce item for winter feed, and Tom cut most of the wild hay in the immediate vicinity, whether it was on any of his placer claims or Government land.

Harper had been in the Muddy Creek area several years longer than Wilson and felt that he had a prior right to everything not actually owned by another party. He was mainly a hide hunter, and the sale of deer and elk hides kept him in sugar, flour, bacon, and beans.

As the years passed, the hatred of the two men for each other grew beyond the importance of each small incident. Many times they threatened each other with death. Wilson said Harper was a horse and cattle thief, while Harper hinted darkly about Wilson illegally cutting hay on Government land.

There was no hint of violence in the bright sunlight that 5th day of August, 1890, along Muddy Creek. Each man in Tom Wilson's hay-cutting crew sweated over his job, and the piled shocks of fragrant, wild hay grew rapidly. Tom Wilson and his son, Tom, Jr., and the other four men in the party little realized that the day was drawing toward a bloody climax.

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Illustrated by Al Martin Napoletano

Shortly after they had eaten a cold lunch, the hay-cutters heard the rapid galloping of a horse coming up the narrow game trail. Wilson's young son, Robert, rode into sight and came to a sliding halt before his father.

"What's the matter, son?" Tom inquired.

"It's Ed Harper and his outfit," panted the small, white-faced, frightened boy. "They rode through the ranch, and when I told 'em they couldn't come past the gate, Ed pulled his gun and threatened to shoot me!"

Wilson's mouth tightened, and he laid a reassuring hand on his young son's tousled head. Since his wife had died, leaving him with three sons to raise, the boys had been Tom's whole life. They were the reason he had left his hard-rock and placer mining to become a rancher. A rough mining camp was no place to raise sons, and the ranch would be something worthwhile to leave the boys when he passed on.

Tom turned to the other men grouped behind him. "Ed's had it in for me a long time. Guess this is what he meant by all his threats."

"They got a mowing machine and a wagon," broke in young Robert, reassured by the comforting presence of his father. Tom squeezed the lad's shoulder and went on:

"This is my hay, and no hide hunter is going to do me out of it!" gritted Tom. He was a hard man to anger, but his temper was white-hot when aroused.

Grave-faced, the men around him nodded assent. Thomas Wilson had cut hay in this meadow for several years, and it was considered his by prior right even though the land belonged to the Government.

Young Tom, only sixteen, grinned widely and patted the rifle he had brought to the meadow with him.

"No, Tommy," said his dad sternly. "We'll settle this peaceably."

Disappointed, Tommy turned away from his father. He still carried the gun.

Robert rode back to the ranch house, and the men returned to their work.

TIME dragged, and soon one of the six men grew restless. He threw down his pitchfork and walked over to a ridge commanding a better view of the wagon road leading to the disputed meadow.

It was between two and three o'clock when he raced back to the others, shouting, "Here they come and they're all armed! I'm going for more guns. We ain't got enough to defend ourselves."

Wilson nodded tight-lipped approval, his usually pleasant face furrowed with lines of worry and indecision. He had told Tommy no fighting—but what if Harper started something? Certainly they wouldn't submit to being shot at and perhaps killed without fighting back

As his man galloped away for the guns, Wilson wondered grimly if he would ever see him again. Too nervous to continue working, the remaining men of the crew gathered beside the machinery to wait for whatever was coming.

Presently, Wilson saw his man returning. He had two pistols with him and his pockets were stuffed with extra ammunition. Young Tommy cheered at sight of the six-guns.

"Remember what I said, Tommy!" Wilson cautioned his hot-headed son.

"Just in case they start anything, I'll hide behind that old log yonder." Tommy pointed to a big log lying beside the creek.

Old Tom raised a hand as if to stop the boy, then dropped it to his side. The lines in his face deepened as he watched his son's confident stride. The boy was too young to know fear of death; it was all an exciting adventure to him.

The strain of waiting was almost unbearable, and the men felt their muscles grow more tense as the slow minutes crawled by. First there was heard the creaking of wagon wheels, the muffled hoofbeats of horses.

As Harper's team and wagon came into view, each man of Wilson's crew looked instinctively toward their guns. The rifles were stacked near a small stand of aspen timber that would make a good cover if real trouble developed.

Closer and closer came Harper's small cavalcade. Two men rode the wagon, accompanied by four horsebackers. All six men packed shooting-irons, and the Wilson party felt increasingly apprehensive.

SILENCE deepened. Even the birds were strangely still. When a shot rang out, both groups were shocked into immobility. Horrified eyes watched incredulously as one of the men on Harper's wagon toppled slowly forward onto the ground.

"Scatter!" shouted Wilson to his men, as he grabbed a rifle and ran for the protection of the big aspen tree.

"Tommy, you *fool!*" he groaned to himself. "Now we're in for it, sure." Sadly, old Tom shook his graying head. "Fool boy got buck fever and squeezed off a shot without realizin' what he was doin'."

Frantically, Harper's crew hunted cover. They were exposed on all sides, with only the wagon for protection.

Another shot cracked out, and one of the horsebackers fell heavily to the ground. Tommy had gotten another man. Wilson watched tensely as yet another Harper man was hit. Now both groups were shooting wildly at each other.

Old Tom watched in helpless horror as Harper—there was no mistaking the burly figure on a big black horse—deliberately took aim and shot under the log where young Tom was lying. As dirt and wood flew from the impact of the bullet, Tommy's head popped up above the log. Harper took the top of the boy's head off with another carefully placed bullet.

"No!" Tom Wilson shouted in agony as the boy's figure collapsed limply on the ground.

Swiftly, Tom tied a rag to the muzzle of his rifle and waved it frantically.

"You surrendering?" Harper's slow, heavy voice boomed across the small meadow.

"Damn you, *no*! Take your dead and leave, afore we kill the rest of you!" Wilson's right forefinger itched to pull trigger on the man who had just killed his son.

Harper moved deliberately as he helped place the two dead men and one wounded man into the wagon. Without a backward glance they drove off, returning the way they came.

Wilson walked slowly over to the spot where his son's body lay. Motionless, he stood looking down at the crumpled, bloody form. *(Continued on page 42)*

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The map is very old. It was drawn by an old prospector who befriended a sick Indian. It says the treasure was last seen going thetaway . . . .

Editor's Note: Dr. Harrington's letter accompanying this story was so interesting that we asked his permission to share it with you.

"Dear Mr. Gipson:

I am presenting a manuscript for your consideration. I do not know just *why* I submit it, because if I were in your position I would reject this article—but fast!

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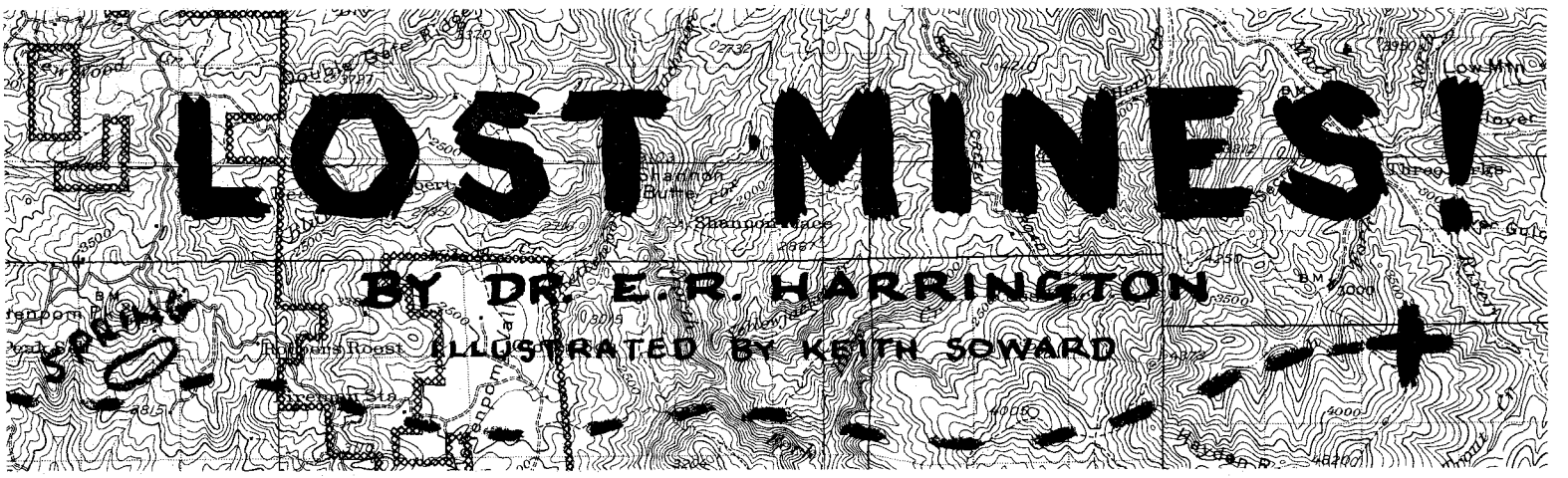

LOST MINES!

BY DR. E. R. HARRINGTON

ILLUSTRATED BY KEITH SOWARD

People quite generally believe in certain things, such as love of country, efficacy of uprightness and honesty, sanctity of motherhood, and the existence of lost mines and buried treasure. My story pokes fun at this latter item. It is straight goods—99.44% of the lost mines and buried treasures are strictly for the gullible and naive. However, this is not a popular attack and so, if I were you, I'd reject this manuscript . . . However, I imagine that you, personally, have a sense of humor and might like to read this yarn. I enclose it with a fully paid return ticket. Thank you for looking at it.

E.R.H."

IT is a sort of Western axiom that an Easterner will swallow any tall tale about the West. The trouble with this theory is that some of the tall tale merchants have become so proficient that they are getting some converts among Westerners, who should know better. Perhaps it is time for a little gentle debunking of some of these Western pipe dreams. Lost mines and buried treasures would be good places to begin. Come with me, podner! Bring your sense of humor and let us take a look at some of these fantasies.

In almost every Wild Western magazine I pick up, I read about some lost mine or buried treasure. The locale is always in the West; the mine (or treasure) is always very rich and very lost. Always there is a map which has been passed down from generation to generation. This map was always drawn by an old prospector who had befriended a sick Indian. The Indian recovers, guides the prospector to the treasure (or mine), but inevitably *something spooky* happens to scare them away before they are able to haul out the loot.

When I hear the start of one of these pipe dreams, I wish that the teller would stop and let me spin the rest of the yarn —the stories are just that much alike. One needs a real sense of humor just to hear such stories through. Mostly, I smile wearily when I hear them. The average listener probably gets a thrill out of the tale, so it does him no harm. Even if he buys a worthless map and goes hunting the loot, he will at least get plenty of fresh air and exercise. The treasure seeker is not likely to get hurt in his quest. About the worst that can happen to him is a great thirst and blistered feet, along with the chastening knowledge that he has been played for a sucker.

By now you have gathered that I believe the tales of lost mines and buried treasures are phony. That is true. Perhaps one in a thousand might involve a treasure or a mine, but even in that case the value of the property has probably been exaggerated a hundred times.

I am pretty sure, for example, that nobody ever hid the treasure of Montezuma; Cortez beat them all to the draw and put it into protective custody. If the Dutchman or the Frenchman ever *had* a mine, it is most likely that it was mined out instead of being lost. The fabled treasures of the Spanish padres are likely to be pure fantasy, as the padres seldom had more than a few coins to click together and they held onto them like grim death. The various robber gangs seldom realized much cash from their robberies and what they got they put right back into circulation. Cool logic indicates that the immense amounts of gold "located" in these lost mines and buried treasures originated in the fertile imaginations of folks who love a good story for its own sake.

BACK in June of 1955 I read in a certain Western magazine (which herein shall be nameless) the astounding statement that there was "Sixty Billion Dollars in Lost Gold" in the various lost mines of the Southwest. The author insisted that the story was true, so let us poke into it a little before we jump on our burro and ride off in all directions looking for a part of it. First of all, the U. S. Geological Survey tells us that the entire gold output of the world for all time since the dawn of history is only about *thirty billion dollars!* The Southwestern country was never a great gold producer; yet this author has those poor Southwestern miners losing more than twice as much gold as the rest of the world has recovered since the first miner picked a nugget out of some brook running before his cave. So, anyway you slice it, this yarn has to be 250 per cent baloney.

Now why do people start such pipe dreams? Some may start them just for laughs. One person with a vivid imagination may build a yarn up over the years, perhaps even believing in it himself. Another tall tale peddler may spin these windies just because the tourist expects some fantastic tale and he is anxious to please. Still another breeze artist may want to float a treasure map as a source of revenue, so that he may later get into the more lucrative field of selling phony uranium stock. Occasionally a person may take too strong a drag on a *marijuana* cigarette or nibble too much on the *peyote* bean. In either case, he will dream up the makings of a good story—the more fantastic the better. And, regardless of how fantastic it is, somebody will accept it as the gospel truth.

For many years people have been looking for the "Lost Adams Diggings" down in the New Mexico country. I knew a gent who had made half a dozen searches for it. He would go out and stay for weeks at a time hunting it. Actually, he usually took one of these trips when he was threatened by some hard job of work or when he had had an especially violent quarrel with his wife. When he was fed up and wanted to get away from it all, he saddled up and went out to hunt the Adams Mine. The mine served as his personal tranquilizing drug, his panacea for all the ills and irritations of the modern world.

Numerous maps were available to all those dreamy adventurers who hoped to locate the mine. A friend of mine made several such maps during the depression. He had contracted the bad habit of eating and made and sold the maps that he might indulge himself in food. Speaking as an expert on the subject, he said that a good Adams Diggings map was "worth" (that is, it would bring from some sucker) about fifty dollars. There were some cheaper editions obtainable, but my friend was a skilled draftsman and turned out only the best drawings. His Adams maps were always meticulously drawn on parchment, properly aged and properly dirty. He declared that soaking such a map for several days in a low place in a wet cow lot did much to increase its age and enhance its value. There were other means of aging the maps, means that did not involve soaking in cow manure, but these were not so effective.

MAPS are best sold or "shoved" by disreputable characters posing as old prospectors. These "prospectors" always decline to go with you in search of the treasure. They are too scared to go. They are afraid of the evil spirits who haunt the mine or the cave. They are afraid of the hostile Indians that lurk in the shadows about the "sacred" place where their ancestors are buried. They are afraid of the black curse that the old mine owners put upon their treasure before they left it.

Let's analyze this set-up a bit. The old "prospector" has a map that will make him rich and yet he sells this to you for fifty dollars or perhaps for just a double shot of bar whiskey. Doesn't make sense, does it? Actually, the old "prospector" doesn't want to go along because he knows damned well that the mine or treasure isn't there. He isn't afraid of evil spirits, and the Indians in those

(Continued on page 32)

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In a leather-bound album, now in possession of Mrs. Don C. Foote, of Billings, Montana, a legendary character of the Old West reveals some startling facts about herself

THE REAL CALAMITY JANE

BY KATHRYN WRIGHT

Photos from the Author

OF all the famous women of the Old West, none has been cloaked with more contradictory legends than the notorious Calamity Jane.

In the half century since her death on August 2, 1903, Calamity has been endowed with the vocabulary of a muleskinner, the liquor capacity of a John Barleycorn, the morals of Madames Du Barry and Pompadour, and the various attributes and skills of Florence Nightingale, Annie Oakley, Poker Alice, Jim Bridger, and Buffalo Bill. The real woman was astounding enough without the legends.

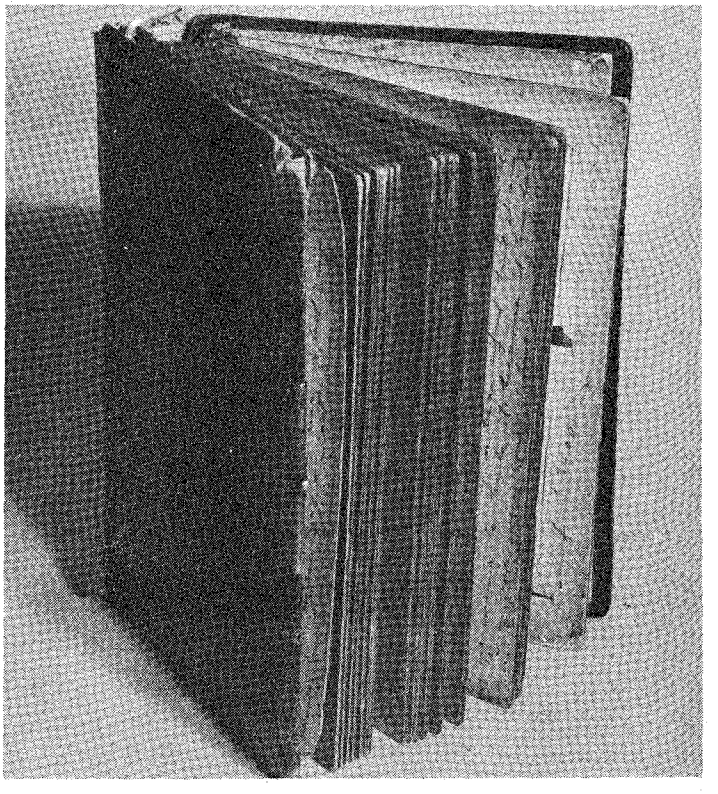
Calamity, born Martha Jane Cannary on May 1, 1852, in Princeton, Missouri, rode a spectacular trail that in the last half of the 1800's took her into the West's Army forts, gold camps, Indian lodges, and boomtowns.

She scorned the frills of women in saloons she frequented, preferring the buckskin garb of the Plains scout. To the public and her casual companions of drinking and gambling houses in towns along stagecoach roads, river banks, and emigrant trails, the blue-eyed redhead was a tobacco-chewing, cigar-smoking, hard-drinking product of the frontier—hard as nails and independent as any man.

But Calamity left a written record of her life, indicating that beneath her fringed leather shirt beat as feminine a heart as any under a fancy bodice.

This record, a series of letters written on the cardboard pages of a leather-bound picture album, is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Don C. Foote, of Billings, Montana, and is displayed in their museum, Wonderland. Its yellowed pages, filled with a generally unpunctuated scrawl, bring to light Calamity's evidence of her marriage to James Butler (Wild Bill)

Left: A picture Calamity Jane left of herself among souvenirs willed to her daughter and gathered up in Deadwood, S. D., by Captain James O'Neil, after her death. Below: A weathered, time-worn picture album holds Calamity Jane's own handwritten record of her adventures and romances as the West's foremost woman scout.



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Hickok, their turbulent love, the divorce and final resumption of that love, justifying the illicit romance with these words: "I was glad to have him again, even if he was married and she so far away. I always excused our sin by knowing he was mine long before he was hers."

The diary and a sheaf of other letters and documents—all full of heartbreak, spine-tingling adventures in Indian country, lonely nights by campfires, nights with Wild Bill and a second husband, Charley Burke, poverty, sickness, and hatred—were accepted by the United States Government as Calamity's property and as satisfactory proof of the identity and age of Mrs. Jean Hickok McCormick, of Billings.

Mrs. McCormick, who left the diary and other mementos to Wonderland Museum upon her death in Billings, February 21, 1951, applied for old age assistance in 1941. After a thorough study and investigation, she was found eligible for aid and on September 6, 1941, was listed in the files of the U. S. Department of Public Welfare as the daughter of Martha Jane (Calamity Jane) Cannary and James Butler (Wild Bill) Hickok, born September 25, 1873, at Benson's Landing. This was an early-day settlement near the present town of Livingston, Montana.

FIRST entry in the diary was made September 25, 1877, in Deadwood, Dakota Territory, and is headed: "To Jim O'Neil. Please give this album to my daughter, Janey Hickok, after my death. Jane Hickok."

Jim O'Neil was Captain James O'Neil, a sea captain who maintained a home in Richmond, Virginia. Calamity had given her daughter to O'Neil for adoption in 1874.

In Deadwood, September, 1880, Calamity wrote in her diary: (Punctuation corrected for readers' convenience) "Janey, a letter from your daddy Jim came today and another picture of you . . . Your picture brought back all the years I lived with your father, and recalled how jealous I was of him. I feel like writing about him tonight, so I will tell you some things you should know. I met James Butler Hickok (Wild Bill) in 1870 near Abilene. I heard a bunch of outlaws planning to kill him. I couldn't get to where my horse was, so I crawled on my hands and knees through the brush past the outlaws for over a mile, and reached the old shack where Bill was staying that night. I told him, and he hid me back of the door while he shot it out with them. They hit him, cutting open the top of his head; then they heard him fall and lit matches to see if he was dead. Bill killed them all. I'll never forget what he looked like with blood running down his face while he used two guns. He never aimed, and I guess he was never known to miss anyone he shot at—I mean those he wanted to kill. He only shot in self-defense . . .

"Then he was quite sick. I nursed him several days, and then while on the trip to Abilene, we met Reverend Sipes and Reverend Warren and we were married. There will be lots of folks doubt that we were ever married, but I will leave you plenty of proof that we were. You were not a woods-colt, Janey. Don't let any of these pus-gutted blatherskites get by with that lie . . . "

Warning her daughter against jealousy, Calamity continued: "It (jealousy) kills love and all the nice things of life. It drove your father from me. When I lost him, I lost everything I ever loved except you. I gave him a divorce so he could marry Agnes Lake. I was trying to make amends for the jealous times and my spells of meanness. If she had loved him, she would have come out here with him. But she didn't, and I was glad to have him again even if he was married and she so far away. I always excused our sin by knowing he was mine long before he was hers . . . "

Hickok, who was shot in the back of the head in a Deadwood saloon on August 2, 1876, married Mrs. Agnes Lake in Cheyenne, Wyoming, March 5, 1876. He left shortly afterward for the Black Hills. Agnes never saw him again. According to Hickok's early biographers, she moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, and was living there in 1880.

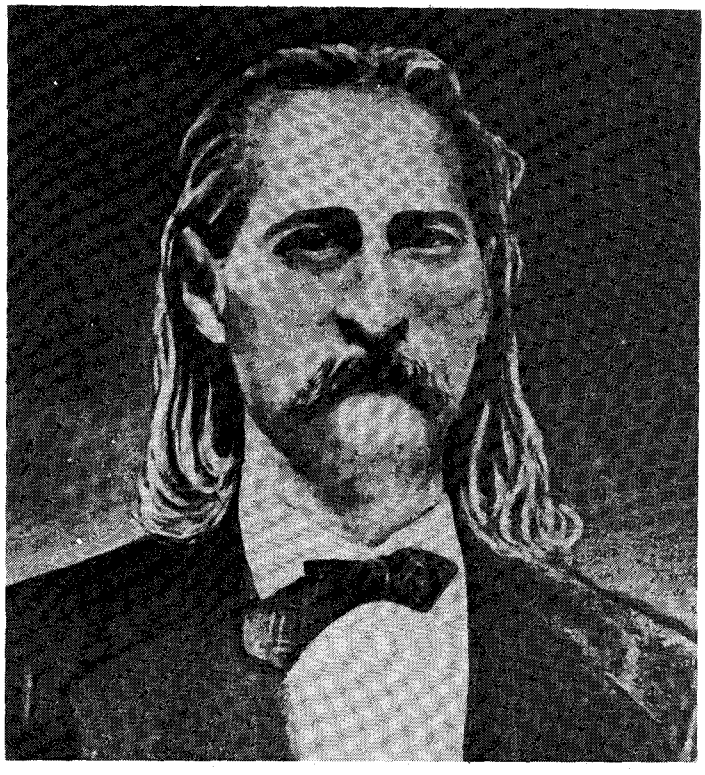
MEANWHILE, the West's foremost woman scout was in Deadwood, nursing a broken heart and wounded vanity; chronic ailments that had plagued her since her marriage to Bill six years before. Woman-like, she decided to snub him should their paths cross again. She quickly discovered that such a course was impossible for her to follow.

" . . . We met one day and we both found we still loved each other better than ever. I forgot everything when I was near him. No one else ever knew—if anyone hinted such to me, I hauled off and knocked them down. He denied it also; we both lived a life of lies. He was meant for me, not Agnes Lake, or he would have stayed with her instead of coming back to me . . . "

Of her second marriage, Calamity wrote on September 25, 1891: "I did a crazy thing some time ago. I married Charley Burke. He got me in a weak moment and we were married."

What became of Charley? There is no later reference to him, except a brief mention in a letter Calamity wrote Cap-

Left: "You are the dead spit image of meself at your age and as I gaze on your little photo tonight I stop as I kiss you and then remembering, tears start and I ask God to let me make amend somehow someday to your father and you." So wrote Calamity Jane, Sept. 25, 1877, in Deadwood, D. T., upon receiving the original of this photo. Right: Photo of portrait of James Butler (Wild Bill) Hickok painted while he was Deputy U. S. Marshal at Abilene, Kansas.



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LA CROSSE TRIBUNE

Daughter Of Famous Pioneer Couple Of Wild West Era Visits La Crosse

She doesn't carry guns—this Jean Hickok McCormick, only child of Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane Cannary Hickok, the couple that tamed the west with six shooters—but she has had almost as exciting a life as her father and mother.

And Jean Hickok McCormick was in La Crosse yesterday attending a Hickok family reunion—decked out in full western garb from a 10-gallon hat down to fancy boots.

The 68-year-old daughter of the west seems paradoxical to her parentage for she is soft-spoken, slender and pretty. She doesn't look like a woman who began life in a log cabin in the wilds of Montana nor one who was taken for a six-month side in an ox-drawn covered wagon through hostile Indian country when she was only days old.

Visits Kinfolk

She came to La Crosse to see her nearest kinfolk—Mrs. William Quinn, 708 South 8th street, Mrs. Al Canfield, 609 South 4th street, (second cousins) and lots of third, fourth and fifth cousins from De Soto and other parts of the state.

Mrs. McCormick traveled here by bus from Billings, Mont., where she spent the summer appearing in rodeos as the daughter of the two fighting-est persons in the great wild west.

The story of her life would make an author of westerns look at his fiction with disgust. Her birth in Livingston, Mont., with her mother unattended in a log cabin at the foot of a mountain range was the beginning.

Her mother almost died for lack of medical care but a Capt. James O'Niel, British master of a Cunard line ship, came upon the cabin in time to give aid.

Daring Trip East

O'Niel went east and Calamity Jane followed almost a month later, taking her infant alone through ferocious Sioux tribes. The mother was equal to the task and got the covered wagon through the danger zones by riding ahead on her horse doing a hand-stand on the saddle. The Indians thought she was insane—and a person to be permitted to go unharmed.

Mrs. McCormick was given to the O'Niels for legal adoption when Calamity Jane reached the east coast. Jane went on to join a road show in which she did western riding and shooting.

Wild Bill Hickok wandered off before Mrs. McCormick's birth and divorced Calamity Jane in favor of a circus queen, Agnes Lake.

Mrs. McCormick, then fostered by the O'Niels, was shuttled back and forth from Liverpool England to New York on the Cunard ship Madagascar of which her foster father was captain.

Learns of Parents

She didn't know her real parentage until her foster father's death in 1912, when her mother's diary was given to her. She was married at the time to a Robert Burkhardt and lived in Richmond, Va. She kept the diary from Burkhardt for four years but he found it one day and divorced Mrs. McCormick when he found out she was the daughter of the famous gunfighters.

Jean McCormick doesn't remember her father at all but does remember Calamity Jane, who came to visit the O'Niels twice, once when Jean was 10 and once when she was 18.

She does remember some stories about the famous couple, though, and has read some of their exciting life in her mother's diary.

Escaped Ambush

Her parents wed in a little town near Abilene, Kans., after Calamity Jane saved Wild Bill Hickok's life. Jane overheard nine desperadoes plotting to ambush Wild Bill. She crept on her hands and knees almost a mile to warn him. Wild Bill shot all nine.

After the wedding, Calamity Jane posed as a male gambler—the Jack of Diamonds—and ran a gambling establishment as Wild Bill's partner in Abilene. Wild Bill meanwhile cleaned up the town single handed as town marshal—a feat for which he was ever afterward famous.

Calamity Jane dropped her male role after a while and became Wild Bill's wife openly. Shortly after this they separated.

Wild Bill was shot through the head by an enemy when only 39 years old. He had a colorful life as a scout, marshal, gunfighter and general tough man of the west in the meantime, though.

Husband Was Killed

Mrs. McCormick, however, had her thrills and tragedies, too. She was married on Armistice day to an American aviator flying for France during the World war. The time was just before the hostilities had ceased. Her husband, Ed McCormick, whom she had known in Richmond, was killed only 40 minutes after the ceremony when his plane was shot down.

Mrs. McCormick leads a quiet life now, appearing in rodeos, teaching penmanship in graded schools in Montana and nursing.

"I like La Crosse," she said yesterday, "and shall be back to visit soon again—now that I know I have relatives."

—Tribune Photo

Jean Hickok McCormick, daughter of Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane—famed gunfighters of the west—attended a Hickok family reunion yesterday at Pettibone park. Decked out in her cowgirl outfit, she is shown with Mrs. William Quinn, left, and Mrs. Al Canfield, right, both second cousins and nearest kin to the 68-year-old westerner.

Reproduction of a clipping from the La Crosse, Wis., Tribune of 1941, which is among the keepsakes and other items on display at the Wonderland Museum in Billings, Montana. Shortly before her death on February 21, 1951, Mrs. Jean Hickok McCormick worked at Wonderland, then called Western Trails Museum.

tain O'Neil, June 20, 1898, from Stringtown, now Bridger, Montana.

"I am so blue and disgusted with life. I have Belle Starr's little girl with me. Her father was Bill's cousin. She worries me to death. Burke is so mean to her. I have gotten so I hate him."

A respite from Burke and "Belle Starr's little girl" came in August, 1893, when Calamity joined Colonel William F. (Buffalo Bill) Cody's Wild West Show and toured Eastern states and England.

Some of Cody's biographers relate that Calamity's career as a member of the troupe was short-lived because of her excessive drinking. Of that tour, Calamity wrote bitterly a few years later:

"Four years have slipped by and I am back in Deadwood. I am tired and feel so old. I am nursing again. I can always fall back on that. I got so lonely for our old West and so disgusted with gadding all over the world . . . Lord, how I hate England with its snobs, its good-for-nothing women with their put-on airs and brogue. They forget that they were thrashed by a handful of Americans not so long ago. I felt like shouting it from the tree tops. I never saw so many parasites as there are in England, especially the women with their blokes. Just because they have handed down one generation to the next some bed-buggy estate, they get the idea they are aristocrats—or in plain words just plain paupers . . ."

Obviously, the trip was an unhappy experience for rough-and-ready Calamity Jane. It must also have been an edifying experience for the English women with whom she came in contact!

OF Billings, Montana, where she is remembered by many old-timers, Calamity was equally vituperative. "Billings," she wrote, "is some lively town; it supports about fifteen hundred toughs. These are hectic days—like hell let out for noon. These human parasites prosper, both men and women. The respectable citizens of the town are powerless; they can't even control the elections. The police figure they would risk complete annihilation by attempting raids on the dens running at top-steam. Block after block is appropriated (composed) entirely of saloons and sporting houses. In the center of this whirlpool of saloons and dives, may be seen the house of Madam Feeley—the hub from which the lesser spokes in the wheel radiate. Any old-timer in the Yellowstone Valley can tell about Feeley's house. It is a large building with brilliantly illuminated windows. A force of professional bouncers are maintained by the establishment to preserve a degree of peace. Madame Feeley reigns supreme; she is an anomaly, a mighty attractive woman, neither ruthless nor unscrupulous . . .

"Located near the Yellowstone River is an inferior spoke in the wheel. In its basement are evil, dirty-smelling, poorly lighted dens, vile and dangerous, where a trap-door opens directly into the river to accommodate those who just can't take it. More often, they are robbed and dumped into the river because the gang thinks they're spies or stool pigeons. I am telling you this because I want you to know the sort of world we have here."

So Calamity found Billings in 1893. How Billings found Calamity nine years later was chronicled in the *Billings Gazette* November 21, 1902.

The account reads: "Calamity Jane is in trouble and in jail again. For some time past she has been acting more than usually unruly and has committed several overt breaches of the peace. Among her more recent escapades was one of yesterday and which would have resulted seriously but for the timely interference of a bystander.

"Without any apparent reason, save that suggested by a mind more or less overstimulated by her favorite tipple, Jane armed herself with a hatchet and invaded Yegen Brothers store and attempted to put an end to one of the young ladies employed in the drygoods department. She advanced toward her with hatchet uplifted and said she was going to chop her to pieces then and there. It may have been only one of Jane's practical jokes, but the victim, having little sense of humor, screamed for help. One of the male clerks disarmed the belligerent Calamity and as-

(Continued on page 28)

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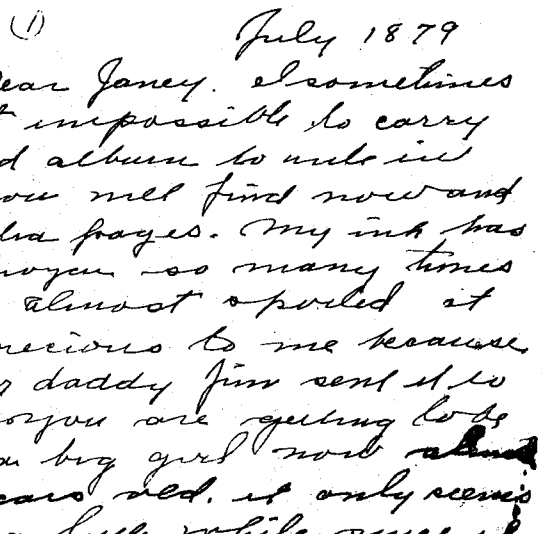


(1) July 1879

Dear Janey. I sometimes find it impossible to carry the old album to write in so you will find now and then extra pages. My ink has been frozen so many times it is almost spoiled it is precious to me because your daddy Jim sent it to me. you are getting to be such a big girl now almost six years old. it only seems such a little while since I met

Portion of a letter from Calamity Jane to her daughter, which was found in the album. It is shown here to show the style of Calamity's handwriting.

FROM THE PEN OF CALAMITY JANE

Following are notes, excerpts, etc., taken from letters and from the diary of Calamity Jane, photostatic copies of which are in our files. We have edited punctuation slightly for reading ease.

July, 1879

Dear Janey:

I sometimes find it impossible to carry the old album to write in, so you will find now and then extra pages. My ink has been frozen so many times it is almost spoiled. It is precious to me because your Daddy Jim sent it to me. You are getting to be such a big girl now, almost six years old. It only seems such a little while since I met your Daddy Jim and Mother Helen O'Neil and gave you to them. Some day I am going to see you. I felt so bad when I heard of Helen's death. You are doomed never to have a mother to live with. May God keep Old Mammy Ross with you, darling.

I am looking after a little boy. His name is Jackie. He is five years older than you. His father and mother were killed by the Indians. I found him the day your father was killed. He thought your father the greatest hero on earth and saw him shot. He is a nice little boy and will be a great man someday.

The Sioux Indians are still troublesome. I went to the battlefield after Custer's battle and I never want to see such a sight again. In a horse which had been disemboweled was the carcass of a man, apparently hidden there to escape the Indians seeking revenge. The squaws had cut legs and arms from the dead soldiers. Their heads were chopped . . . their eyes poked out. You see, Custer had molested an Indian village, running the squaws and children from their camp; so one can't blame them for getting even in their own way. Your Uncle Cy was in that battle, Janey. I found him hacked to pieces, his head in one place, legs and arms scattered about. I dug a grave and put his poor, poor old body in my saddle blanket and buried him. I can never think of him without crying. Goodnight, dear, till next time.

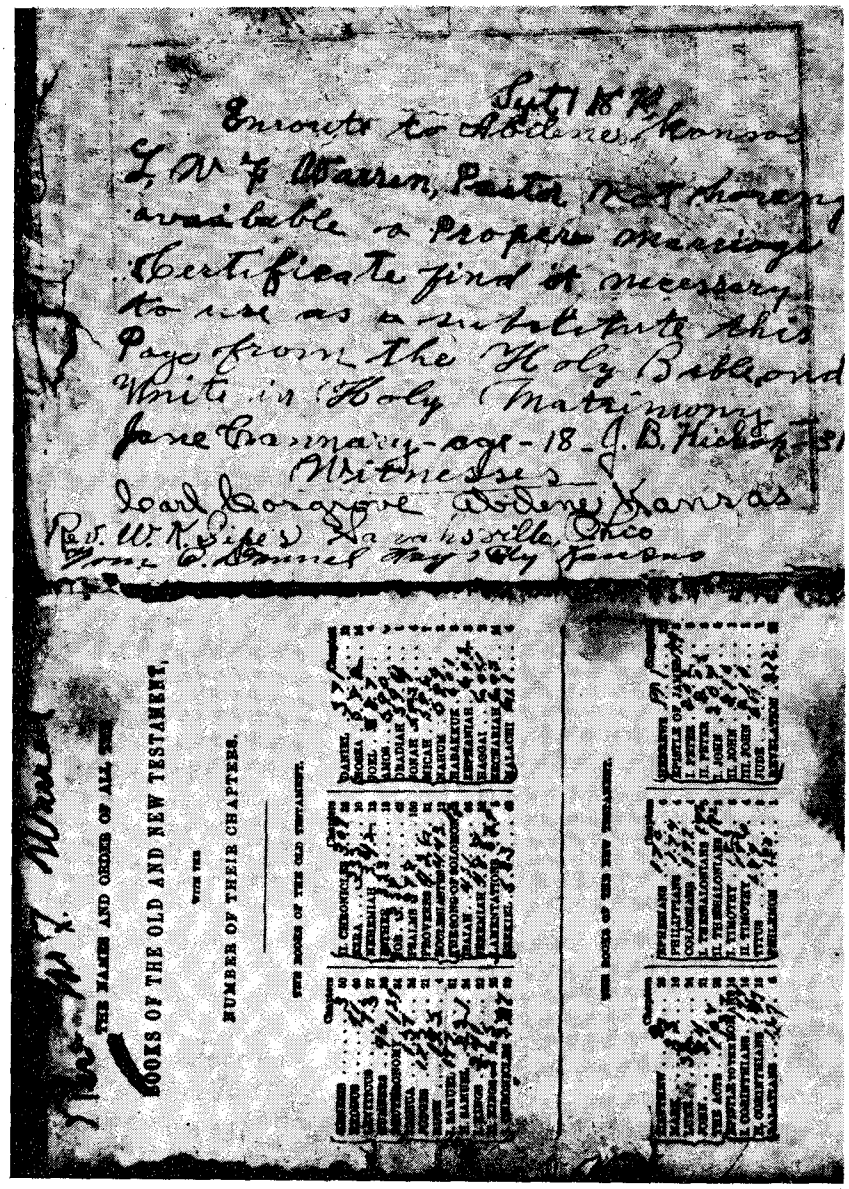
July, 1880

Dear Janey:

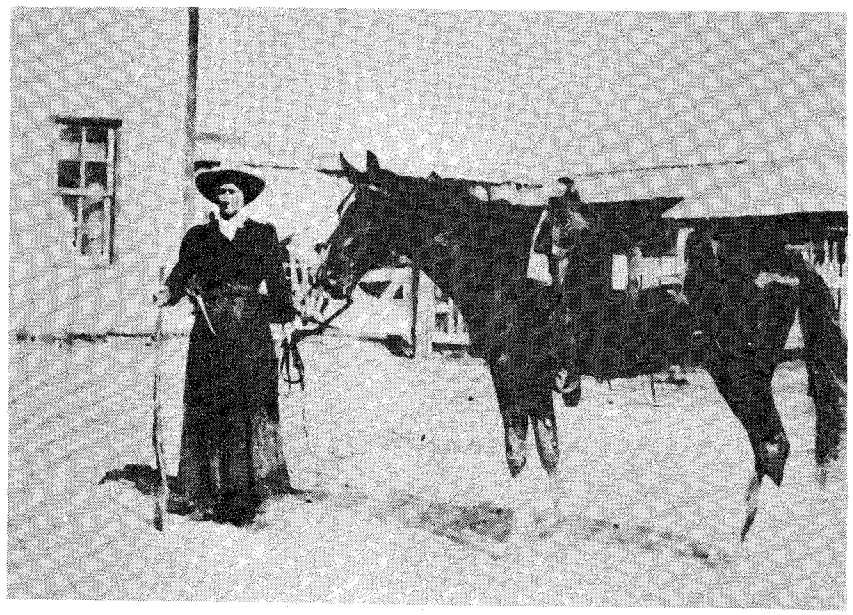
I am here in Coulson. It has been one year since I have heard from your Daddy Jim. You should see Coulson. I met a man here today from Deadwood who knew my best friend there, Mr. Will Sull. I was sick with a fever of some sort while rooming at his hotel, the Hotel Babyface. Sull took over from a New Orleans man, Porter; and Sull was so good to me. He knows his business. I like him very much. He always greets me with "Howdy, Jane, little girl, keep a stiff upper lip. Remember you're a good girl." He and your Daddy Jim are the only two men who have faith in me. Queer —the men I could like are easterners.

I went by stage to Cheyenne awhile back and had quite an exciting time. The stage is run by . . .

(Continued on page 41)



Above: Bible pages used by Rev. W. F. Warren when he united Calamity Jane and Wild Bill in marriage. In her diary to her daughter, Calamity explained: "Your father planned to have it (the marriage certificate) transferred to a real one printed. I may get it fixed up someday like he wanted it. Even if I do, always keep this one Janey, anyway. It may not look as nice but it was the only way Rev. Warren and Rev. Sipes could fix one up so far from civilization." Below: Calamity posed with her horse, Satan, for Dr. W. A. Allen, early-day Billings dentist and photographer.



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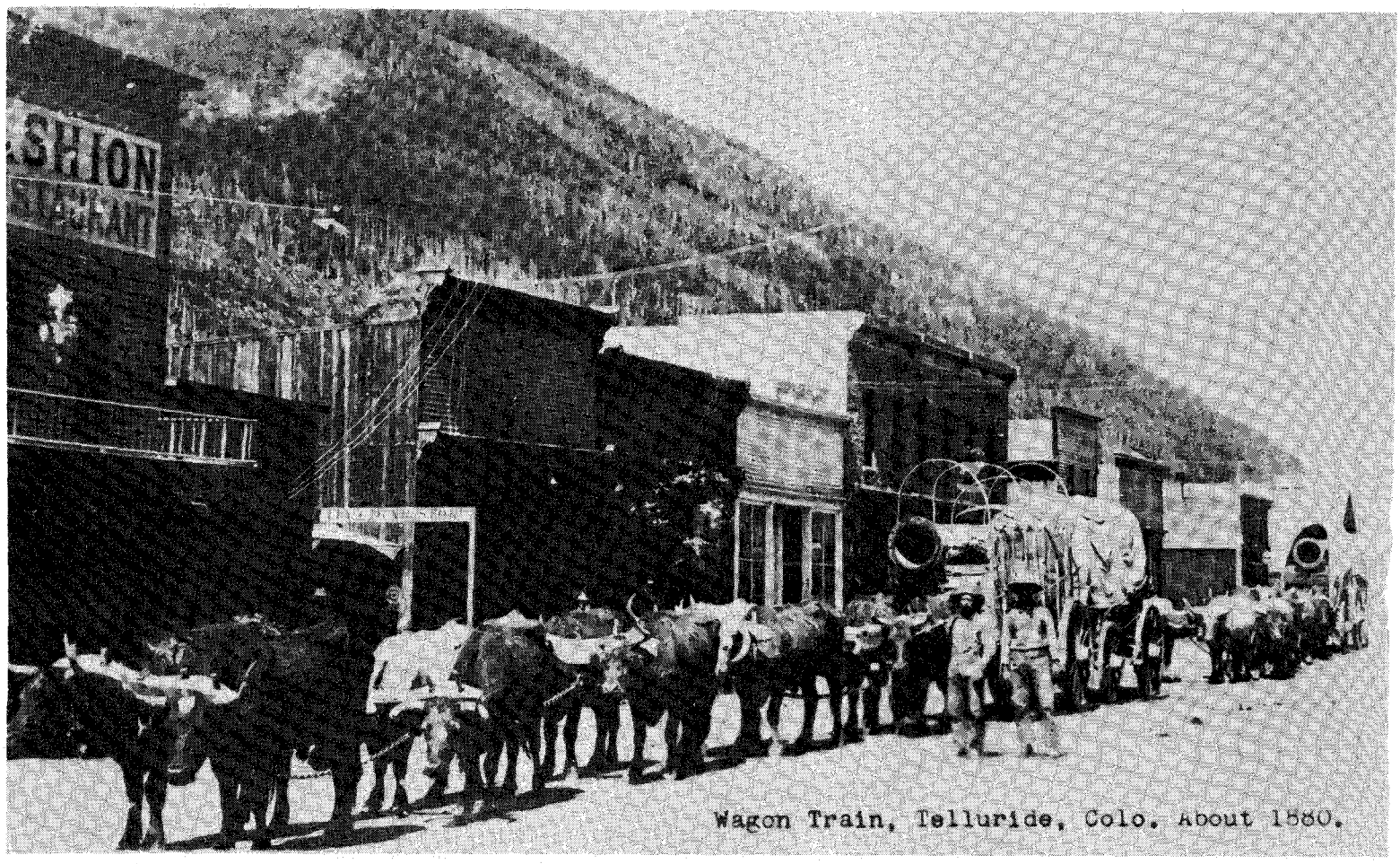

Wagon Train, Telluride, Colo. About 1880.

Wild Old Days

Dear Joe:

Here is an old picture (shown above) of about the last of the Bull Teams. At the time this was taken Gunnison was the end of the narrow gauge railroad. Gold had been found at Grass Roots in the basin above Telluride, the old Smuggler. It was closed down recently. Untold millions of dollars were taken out of it.

Dave Woods built the first road into the country and hauled in all freight with bull teams. The large pipe was for their new town's water works. The first power line ever to be used was from Telum, on the San Miguel River, generated by a turbine to Telluride. One of the West's worst gunmen, Bob Meldrun, used to be a guard at the Smuggler Mine.

I thought this picture might interest you.

Respectfully, P. R. Steele

TREASURE ON THE RIO GRANDE

BY BURL TUTTLE

IN the year 1876, dust raised by thousands of longhorn cattle trailing to Kansas, sifted over San Antonio like a thick fog. Cowboys and gamblers jammed the streets. The Jack Harris Saloon and Variety Theater was known from the Gulf of Mexico to the Canadian border. Near it was the White Elephant Saloon, where tens of thousands of dollars changed hands nightly. Indian fighters with "vouchers," as they called the scalps dangling from their belts, paraded the streets. Great trains of Chihuahua wagons, drawn by sixteen mules each and freighted with flour and silver, clattered across Main Plaza. Covered wagons, with their tired, grimy occupants, stood in open spaces around the town. Women, with children tugging at their skirts and holding babies in their arms, stood wearily by. Their men were dressed in sober blacks and grays, the mark of farm life plainly evident in their heavy muscles and calloused hands.

Samuel Bell, the town's leading jeweler, was making fine Bowie knives at this time. Wild turkeys, at fifteen cents a pound, were a drug on the market. Merchants did a rushing business in all types of merchandise. The military telegraph had just been strung; the Sunset railroad was coming. San Antonio was lusty, free, booming, with the sky the limit. It was inevitable that the town was a mecca for slick characters of both sexes.

In that spring of 1876, Rena Decker, a bored and beautiful waitress quit her monotonous job in one of Brockton, Massachusetts', leading hotels, and headed south for Jacksonville, Florida. There she met an attractive Cuban *grizette* named Montez Veronica Rodriquez. The two girls decided to seek their joint fortunes in San Antonio.

In San Antonio, they were quickly taken up by two smooth operators named Pronto Green and Dirk Pacer. For business and biological reasons, the quartet formed an alliance. Until February, 1877, the two couples were conspicuous figures in San Antonio hot spots. Then, suddenly, they went to Mexico City.

There they opened an establishment called The Open Palace—a spicy combination of saloon, cafe, gambling hall, and plenty of "private" bedrooms. The Palace paid well, but disgruntled patrons raised so much hell that the owners were forced to close it in short order. They decided to try next the city of Durango.

While they were preparing to make this change, Pronto Green acquired from a Chinese trader a golden idol with eyes, necklace, and other adornments of rare opals. The opals were removed and two of them were set into rings for Rena and Montez. The idol itself was melted into bullion. Rena, strongly superstitious, refused to wear the opal ring. Montez gladly added it to her own jewelry collection. Meantime, Green, as banker for the company, invested in other opals.

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In Durango, the four opened a resort similar to The Open Palace in Mexico City. This place, too, prospered for a time. Then one night a general row broke out in which a man was killed and several others wounded. The adventurers were again forced to close. Now they began roving from city to city, often taking in remote mining camps as well.

In time Rena Decker became disgusted with the sordid life she was leading and determined to quit it and go back east. She asked for her share of the gains, refusing to take any part of the opals. She set out alone for the Texas border, and in time was reported to be living a life of genteel respectability in her home town of Brockton, Massachusetts.

Leaving Mexico one jump ahead of the police in March, 1881, the other three adventurers entered Texas at the mouth of the Pecos River.

Here Montez Rodriquez died of a fever. Dirk Pacer and Pronto Green borrowed tools from a sheepcamp, dug her grave and buried her with the two opal rings on her fingers. A Mexican priest officiated at the grave-side, and a stone with the initials M.V.R. cut on it was placed at the head of the grave. The burial spot was on the east side of the Pecos, a short distance from its mouth.

Green and Pacer now decided to make their way back east, taking care to avoid San Antonio and other places in Texas where they were too well known. To be free to move about without the burden of their fortune, they decided to bury the major portion of it. Accordingly they secreted $37,500 worth of silver and a bag of Mexican opals. The gold they took with them.

Reaching Indian Territory, Dirk Pacer became too ill to go on. Pronto Green arranged with a native to care for the sick man, and then rode on into Kansas where he was later killed in a railroad wreck. Hearing of his partner's death and realizing that his own was near, Pacer told his benefactor of the buried hoard of treasure. The cache, as he described it, was in one of the side canyons of the Pecos not far above the rock on which was carved the initials of Montez Veronica Rodriquez.

So far as the records show, Pacer's benefactor made the only search for the buried treasure and returned empty-handed.

It is still there, near the desolate rock marked M. V. R.—so the story goes.

ONE PAIL OF WATER

BY JEFFREY FLEECE

IT was a chilly, rainy day early in 1865 in the mountains of California, discouraging weather for even the optimistic followers of that most optimistic of all occupations—gold mining.

A miserable day, indeed—but when tiny gleaming specks began to appear in the washings, Jim, the more experienced of the two young pocket miners, forgot the bad weather in his excitement. Those yellow flecks might indicate the presence nearby of a valuable pocket of pure gold.

Jim grew increasingly excited and eager as each pan of dirt showed more "color." But young Sam, Jim's assistant, was getting more and more disgusted with the cold and the rain. Finally, Sam, who had been hauling the water, put down his pail and drawled:

"Jim, I won't lug any more water. This work is messy and disagreeable, no job for a gentleman."

Jim pleaded with his partner to continue, to carry just one more pail of water. But Sam was adamant, his positive manner for once matching his red hair rather than his easy-going movements and speech.

"No sir, not a ding-blasted drop!" he declared. "Not if I knew there was a million dollars in that pan."

So Jim gave up, too. But before he left, he scribbled a thirty-day claim on a page out of his notebook and weighted it down with his last full pan of dirt from the diggings.

The bad weather continued, and the two young miners did not return to their claim. But in the meantime, the rain did Sam's work for him, washing the dirt out of Jim's pan until a handful of pure gold nuggets gleamed in the mountain air.

Two other miners, immigrant Austrians, found Jim's pan, patiently waited out the thirty-day waiting period, and then discovered nearby a pocket which yielded close to $20,000 worth of gold.

It was some time before Sam found out how much he could have made from just one more pail of water. Jim Gillis, his partner, always declared, "If Sam had got that pocket, he would have been a miner to the end of his days."

Instead, Sam Clemens went back to San Francisco and resumed writing articles and stories under a pen name then hardly known—"Mark Twain."

AND IT RAINED

BY WELDON F. HEALD

BIG Dan Ming wasn't a praying man. Fact is, nobody thought he knew how. Maybe that's why some wag suggested that Dan open the Arizona cattlemen's meeting in 1885 at Willcox with a prayer. But he fooled them. He made a straight-from-the-shoulder bargain with the Lord that went down in history.

Dan was an army man. After the Civil War, he came out to Arizona Territory in the 1870's and fought in the campaigns against the battling Apaches. He found a fine piece of land in Aravaipa Canyon where he later settled down as a cattleman and became somewhat of a politician. He even started a town and named it Mingville. But army life called Big Dan again in 1916. He ran pack trains for General Pershing's futile Mexican expedition against Pancho Villa. In fact, Big Dan Ming had a long and busy life. He died in San Francisco in 1926 at the age of 84.

But Dan's immortality is solely due to his one and only prayer. What led up to it was the drought of 1884-1885. It was dry and getting dryer. Feed was scarce and getting scarcer. Cattle were thin and getting thinner. Things looked bad. So it was natural that Dan's prayer was a plea for rain. He rose and the hall quieted down, all heads bowed.

"Oh Lord," he began in a loud voice. "I'm about to round you up for a good plain talk. Now Lord, I ain't like these fellows who come bothering you every day. This is the first time I ever tackled you for anything and if you will grant this I'll promise never to bother you again. We want rain, good Lord, and we want it bad, and we ask you to send us some. But if you can't or don't want to send us any, for Christ's sake don't make it rain up around Hooker's or Leitch's ranges, but treat us all alike. Amen."

The story is that the Lord couldn't resist such a fair, reasonable proposition and sent general rains that included everybody.

SPURS TO THE SUNSET

BY STANLEY G. GRAYOVSKI

Whether for freedom, duty, fame, or fortune, many intrepid Americans traveled westward into the vast, unexplored land. Today, many modern highways traverse close by these trails blazed by America's adventurous sons. And these early travelers sketched, mapped, and compiled notes for future westward migrations.

Listed below are statements relative to 10 American travelers. How many can you identify? A good traveler or star westerner should be able to identify at least seven.

1. He led his oppressed people to a desolate desert land. "This is the place," he told his followers. And they stayed to colonize and develop the land.

2. A free trapper, he also led many scouting expeditions. He discovered passes through the Rockies, and also the Great Salt Lake.

3. This young Kentuckian was an intrepid adventurer, Indian Scout, trapper, Army officer, and guide. He traveled the breadth of the west, down to Mexico, and up to the Canadian border. Acclaimed as "The Monarch of the Plains," he later originated the Indian Reservation System adopted by the government.

4. This New Yorker, called "The Fighting Methodist," joined a band of free trappers to seek his fortune. He was the first white man to cross the Rockies to the Pacific from the Middle Missouri country via the Great Salt Lake and the Colorado River. Led many trapping parties to California and Oregon. He was killed by Indians while enroute to Santa Fe.

5. A German immigrant, he came to America with a little bundle of clothing tied to the end of a stick. Worked in a fur trading house; later, he founded his own firm. In 15 years, he became America's first millionaire. He financed an expedition to the Pacific Northwest. The party named a trading post in his name; a city now bears that name.

6. Most famous of American pathfinders, these two men discovered the Great Falls of the Missouri, and the source of that stream. They were the first Americans to cross the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific. At the mouth of the Columbia River, they raised the Stars and Stripes. Sketched invaluable maps and collected data of the country.

7. An army captain from New Jersey, this man traversed the Santa Fe Trail which was opened in 1804 by La Lande, a fur trader from Illinois. History has recorded his accomplishments throughout the Southwest. A peak in Colorado bears his name. In the '20's, ascent of this peak became an American "must."

8. Known as the Pathfinder, this military leader was in charge of 3 official expeditions. He served as a general during the Mexican War. He was defeated

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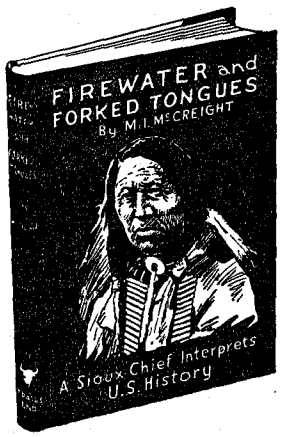

FIREWATER AND FORKED TONGUES

By M. I. McCreight

Flying Hawk, nephew of Sitting Bull and a warrior in the Custer Fight, over a period of years dictated and thumb-printed his version of U.S. History to his friend, M. I. McCreight.

An indictment of the white man's treatment of the American Indian. The book covers many incidents of history from Cortez and Columbus down through the Wounded Knee affair in 1890. Particularly important is Flying Hawk's eye-witness account of the Custer Fight in 1876. The old Sioux Chief died in 1931.

Full page color reproduction of heretofore unpublished painting by Charles M. Russell, also full page pen and ink drawing and end paper drawing by Russell. Photographs of Flying Hawk. 208 pages, fine cloth binding, gold stamping, full color jacket with portrait of Flying Hawk by Scheuerle. Index. Size 8¼ x 5½ inches.

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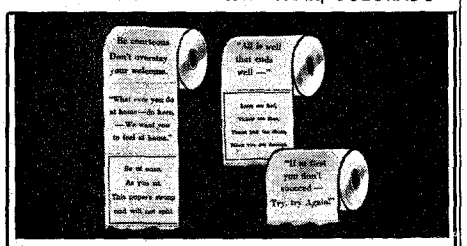

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by James Buchanan for the presidency.

9. At Sutter's Mill, in 1848, this Jerseyan discovered gold. The following year produced the greatest gold stampede ever known. During the next 20 years about a billion dollars in gold was mined. But the discoverer remained poor and died poor.

10. A Missourian, this ex-Confederate soldier traveled to Arizona, New Mexico, Mexico, Spain, and Portugal, to visit record and title offices. On May 9, 1881, he went to Phoenix, Arizona, and claimed that under the Spanish titles of Baron de Arizonaca and Caballero de los Colorados, he was the rightful proprietor of 10,800,000 acres. His documents were in order. Counsel advised ranchers, miners, railroads, and small property owners to settle accounts. The Federal Government was presented with a bill for $25,000,000. His income was reported at $300,000 a year. In 1895, after years of search, the Baron was tried and convicted of land fraud. He was sentenced to 6 years in the penitentiary. This master forger and perpetrator of the greatest swindle in American history died a poor, lonely man.

ANSWERS: 1—Brigham Young; 2—Jim Bridger; 3—Christopher (Kit) Carson; 4—Jebediah Smith; 5—John Jacob Astor; 6—Meriwether Lewis and William Clark; 7—Zebulon Pike; 8—John C. Fremont; 9—James Marshall; 10—James Addison Reavis.

The Real Calamity Jane

(Continued from page 24)

sisted her from the battlefield. No complaint was made and she retired in order.

"This morning Calamity visited another store on the south side and again threw down the gage. She was promptly arrested and will be tried this afternoon should she be sober enough to face the bar of justice. It is deemed likely that she will receive a sentence long enough to give her time to sober up."

BESIDES her love for liquor and fights, Calamity also had a domestic streak as shown in a diary entry in which she tells of purchasing land west of Billings. She wrote:

"I have a cabin of logs on it . . . There is a shack not very far away from my hut and a bunch of outlaws living there. I cook lots of things for them and they pay me well for everything. I baked two dozen loaves of bread this week, eight cakes, fifteen mince pies . . . I am going to write down my receipts (recipes) for you. Maybe some day you might like to know if I could cook or not. I am proud of my cooking, especially of my fish dishes, cakes, and pies . . ."

The outlaws apparently didn't pay Calamity enough, for the land went for taxes a few years later. Some rotting logs and a crumbling stone fireplace chimney remain as mute evidence of her residence there. Whether Calamity realized her land was gone is a question.

In June, 1903, back in Deadwood ill and nearly blind, Calamity scrawled: "I am sick and haven't long to live. I am taking many secrets with me, Janey; what I am and what I might have been. I'm not as black as I've been painted—I want you to believe that . . . If you ever come out here, fix up my old home and be sure to find General Allen, of Billings. He was a good friend."

Knowing her time was short, Calamity sent for Captain O'Neil and in his presence laboriously wrote a confession which fills the last pages of the album.

"I, Jane Hickok Burke, better known as Calamity Jane, of my own free will and being of sound mind, do this day June 3, 1903, make this confession. I have lied about my past life. To help clear up my daughter's birth-right and my sister's daughter's birth, I am making this confession to James O'Neil to make public or to keep to himself. I was born in Missouri. I had several sisters, but only one is to be mentioned in this. People got snoopy, so I told them lies to hear their tongues wag. The women are all snakes and none of them I can call friends. All letters and information given prior to this are lies except the diary I have kept for Janey since 1877.

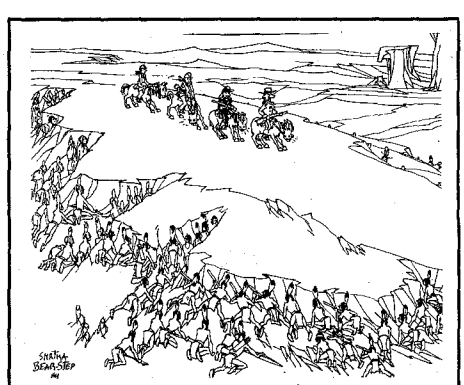
"The only lie in that is where I said Bell Starr was no kin of mine. She was my sister, raised by Ben Waddell and his wife. They were killed in the Eighties, in Oklahoma. They never knew our relation. After their death, Bell came to me under the name of Starr. She married William Hickok, cousin to my daughter's father, James Butler Hickok. I lied about having a daughter born to me in 1887; I nursed my sister Bell at that time. She gave birth to a girl whom she named Jessie Elizabeth. Then Jack Oakes came from Fort Pierre. Hickok believed the worst of his wife. He was ashamed of her doings and refused to live with her. She lived with Jack Oakes, and to them was born a son, Charley Oakes. Jessie Elizabeth was born October 28, 1887, near Benson's Landing, where Janey was born September 25, 1873.

"Bell posed as my daughter and Jessie Elizabeth as my granddaughter. They were neither, for Bell was older than I am. Charley's father murdered a man in Fort Pierre. I have been called the common-law wife of King, Sonors, Wilson, and Dorsett. I was legally married to Hickok and Burke. I dare anyone to deny these facts.

(Signed) Jane Hickok Burke"

Those who signed as witnesses were James O'Neil, R. R. Ryan, and N. K. Sipes.

Calamity's claim of marriage to Hickok has been generally denied and ridiculed in after years, and Calamity herself kept it hidden during her lifetime. Death, on August 2, 1903, brought her openly to a permanent association and place with Wild Bill. Their graves lie side by side in Deadwood's Mount Moriah Cemetery.



"Mister Butterworth, Sir, I wish to go on record as repeating I don't like it so peaceful and quiet."

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Truly Western

Old-timers' Corral

Dear Norm:

You have asked me to write you some of my experiences in Alaska during the Gold Rush Days of 1898-99, so I will tell you of one trip I took from Skagway to Atlin when the going was just a bit rugged. Atlin is about 180 miles from Skagway, all travel by lakes except the 39 miles from Skagway to Bennett.

It is about 18 miles from Skagway to the Summit, and you go up 220 feet. The worst of this climb is after you get to White Pass. The Summit is where you cross over into Canada, where the flags fly side by side—the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack.

I worked the latter part of 1898 and early in 1899 for a man named Graves, whom I had known on the Skagit River back in Washington. We would get out about three or four o'clock in the morning and start putting our packs on 27 head of horses—some gentle, some pretty ornery. The temperature was generally around zero and the wind was always blowing, so working around horses with a lantern and packing all kinds of freight from boxes to barrels and some bales of hay was no job for a tenderfoot.

We would walk the 18 miles to the Summit and ride pack horses back, generally getting in about nine or ten o'clock at night. We tailed the horses on until we got to White Pass, and then let them go in single file as we started up the grade. In that way, if one horse went off the grade, he did not take any others with him. When a horse goes off the grade, he does not roll sideways, but goes end over end like a cut log. It's a pretty horrifying sight to see one go over. Sometimes they'll scream as they fall, in a manner to make your blood run cold. At the Summit, the freight was generally put on sleds as the land is fairly level with the last nine miles down-grade.

I left in April of '99 for a trip into Atlin with eight horses and five sleds, taking a party of five and all the freight we could haul. Of course, we had to haul horse feed. The weather turned quite warm, and the snow on the lake was melting fast and made travel slow, as the sled runners cut down through this snow ice to solid ice. From Bennett to Atlin is about 140 miles, as I recall. We had Dalton bob sleds, and we sure were longer getting to Atlin than we had bargained for. Horse feed soon became scarce. There were not many teams on the lake, but one man was overloaded with oats, so I bought two sacks from him at twenty dollars a sack.

When we got to Atlin, I found only one place to get ashore as all along the shore the ice was melting. It was a mighty ticklish proposition, but I finally made it okay, although a couple of my companions seemed about to take a heart attack before we got to solid ground.

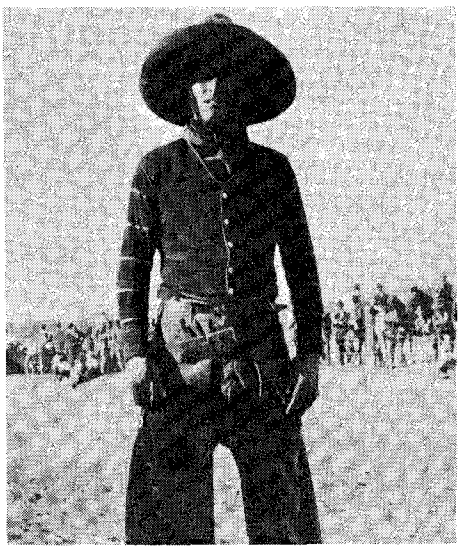
I unloaded the sleds and started right back—the only pack string on the lake for the next 140 miles. At the lower end of Lake Bennett I spotted some teams ashore. I discovered that their outfit had lost a team loaded with iron through the ice the day before. My horse feed was running low again, so I talked one of the drivers into selling me 80 pounds of hay at two-bits the pound.

That night it turned cold, and the temperature dropped to around 40 degrees below zero. I holed up at a log cabin that night about 14 miles from the Summit and made Skagway the next day. Never was so glad to see a trip over in my life!

Such was life in Alaska in the Gold Rush Days.

Well, good-bye for this time, Norm. I hope to see you up here some day. I spent my 88th birthday on a trip to Arizona. Sorry I did not get down to Texas to see you. Well, some day I may just fly down to Austin to see you and Gayle and the whole TW outfit. I have every copy of *True West* that has been published, you know. Keep them in a binder. All for now—Jack Parberry, Route 1, Box 29, Scio, Oregon.

We'd be mighty happy to have you drop by anytime, Jack. The coffeepot is always ready on the back of the stove, and old Joe would probably dig out that bottle of Jack Daniels he has cached away for special occasions. Make it soon, podner, we'll be watching for you!



The late Tom Mix.

Letters on Tom Mix

Dear Norm:

In reply to the letter in the February issue of *True West* regarding Tom Mix, from C. A. Dill, of Vinita, Oklahoma:

Well, I've heard it said before that Tom Mix was not a real cowboy, and I would like to add a few words of my own.

I knew Tom and worked with him in movies, associating with all the members of his company on location and at the studio. No one who knew Tom ever mentioned such a thing where I got wind of it. And, believe me, talk from the saddle-room included plenty of gossip. As Olive Mix used to say, "that remark smelled of saddle leather."

Olive married Tom just across the Montana state line in about 1909 before he got into pictures. There was a terrible snowstorm, but it is true that they were just visiting friends there. Olive was eighteen. Tom came to the ranch, and the night they planned to be married the snowstorm arrived and they sent for a Justice of the Peace to come and perform the ceremony. (Registered at Medora, S. D.)

(Continued on page 43)

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CHARLES M. RUSSELL (Self-Portrait)

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Christmas In A Canyon

(Continued from page 17)

were several herds of antelope and mustangs in sight. The Major, mounted on Old Sideways, was ambling on ahead. A topographer had mighty little to map on the plains; he drew a square for a section and lettered "L.P." neatly in a corner. Suddenly, the Major and Old Sideways began to sink beneath the surface. We yelled and he turned and waved his hat as though cheering on his men at Kennesaw Mountain fight. Then he disappeared beneath the plain.

The cattle, antelope, and mustangs were in plain view for miles ahead beyond where he disappeared. A calm buzzard floated on motionless wings about a mile above us. We wondered if that meant anything. They are wise birds.

Dave loped ahead, started to sink, stopped and called for a point at short range.

We hurried on; reached and passed Dave; started down a gentle slope and stopped on the brink of the Palo Duro Canyon.

To see the sight in front of us was enough to make the heart miss a beat. It could not be looked upon without causing the beholder to thrill with appreciation of the wonderful works of the Great Architect of the universe.

HERE, the result of the slow erosive action of waters through hundreds of thousands — perhaps millions — of years, was a gash cut through the plains for fifty miles. In places it is over a thousand feet deep and five miles in width. It is one of the wonder spots of America. Along the rim we saw a band of yellow, where the plains grass dipped to the rim rock. This rim rock, a heavy band of gray, capped the canyon as far as the eye could reach. Below it the exposed strata showed as though some giant hand had drawn brushes, dipped in many colors, along the miles of canyon walls. Pink, blue, red, gray, green, yellow, purple, brown, blended in the distance into a lovely purple shade. At intervals were ledges clothed with the deep green of tall cedars. Diamond-like points of light were reflected from springs gushing out of the rocks to fall in terraced cascades and to be lost in the sand and gravel at the bottom of the gorge.

We gazed in silence for a long, long time. The air was like crystal in the canyon that crisp winter day.

Movements along a great cedar-covered ledge, a half mile across the gash and five hundred feet down, caught Dave's huntsman's eyes. He pointed. "Look," he almost whispered, "two bears! And over there, turkeys—more than twenty."

The Major sat on a rock feverishly doing topography. He had plenty to do. He was happy with the slopes of all degrees and directions; with precipices here and there.

To the south, mustangs, antelope, and cattle contentedly grazed. We camped where we found some rain water caught in large potholes in the cap-rock.

Next day it took Dave half a day of hard climbing to reach the south side of the canyon, where he established line points which we triangulated. We could not hope to measure accurately across that gorge.

The wagons had to go to the junction of the Palo Duro and Terra Blanca canyons to effect a crossing to the south side.

We ran many survey lines over the plains and in the canyons. Much of the work was by triangulation and was very interesting indeed.

We camped one Saturday night at a waterhole on a nameless creek which ran into the Palo Duro. Sunday morning all the men were in the tents resting when P. G. went outside and at once called in an awe-struck voice: "Great Caesar's Ghost! Boys, look here!"

The wonder-working mirage was busy. The Palo Duro lay extended beneath us and up in the heavens was another Palo Duro canyon—upside down! Every stratum of rock, every clump of trees, the gleaming surfaces of water—all, to the minutest detail, were plainly to be seen reversed in the sky above. The phenomenon lasted for nearly an hour. Seldom is such a wonderful sight beheld by man.

P. G. named the creek near our camp "Sunday Creek." It is on the map now.

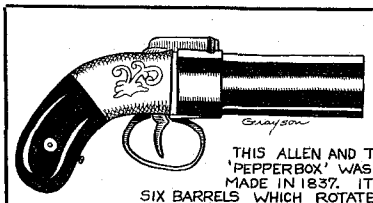
The work on the south side was completed, and we moved back to the north side of the canyon and worked until the latter part of December.

There had been no very severe weather —rather warm days and cool, delightful nights. The air was like fine wine. Work was a vast delight. Sleep under the stars was a dip into the fountain of perpetual youth.

ONE of the wagons had gone to town for supplies and returned two days before Christmas. On the morning of the twenty-fourth we broke camp, and the heavy wagons started for a new camp site several miles to the east of where our first line had crossed the canyon. The line crew went several miles to the north and started to run a line south toward the new camp. All went well until about the middle of the afternoon.

Dave had just taken a front-sight and given the "O.K." signal to come ahead, when we saw him wave his arms in a signal that meant "Look." He seemed to point to the north. We looked, but could see nothing unusual. When we reached Dave and asked what was the matter, he answered, "Norther coming," and loped off for another sight. There did seem to be a slight haze in the north—low down on the surface of the plains.

When we reached the next hub and looked back, there was a dun colored arch distinct above the plain, far to the north. At the next stop we established a corner and dug four pits and built an earth mound. I remember we were quite warm from the work. By the time we were through this—hardly three-quarters of an hour from the time Dave's sharp eyes had seen the approaching norther—the dun colored arch extended to the horizon from east to west and was almost upon us from the north. It did not extend very far above the plains. P. G. gave the order to quit work and make for camp.



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The outfit moved with celerity. The Major and Old Sideways had gone south some time before. Dave and Martin let their ponies lope. Sebe shook the reins at his long legged light-wagon team and they galloped madly from the storm. But it caught us in a few minutes. With a rush of ice cold wind, a snarl like an angry beast, an awful roar, changing into a long drawn out wail which continued to rise and fall—the yellow norther of the plains struck and enveloped us.

The air was full of ice needles that drove into the exposed flesh and stuck, but did not seem to melt. The snow seemed to parallel the ground in its flight; yet the plains grass was covered by it in a few minutes and it rolled along the ground with the wind. That wind didn't turn aside. When it hit you, it just kept right on through your body, as though your flesh offered no obstruction to it. There wasn't a hill between us and the North Pole, and that wind must have come all the way—and gathering power at every jump.

We had been sweating ten minutes before. Now we pulled the wagon sheet over us, huddling under it. But the wind and cold were pitiless and cut and stung despite the cover.

Sebe let his mules run for several miles. They ran straight south and made no effort to turn. The norther attended to that.

We couldn't see ten feet ahead of the team, but we knew that somewhere ahead of us was a thousand foot canyon with sides nearly straight down for several hundred feet. We knew we had gone a long way and we thought we were within a mile of the cap-rock when those two Missouri mules suddenly stopped. Fortunately nothing broke and we managed to stay in the wagon.

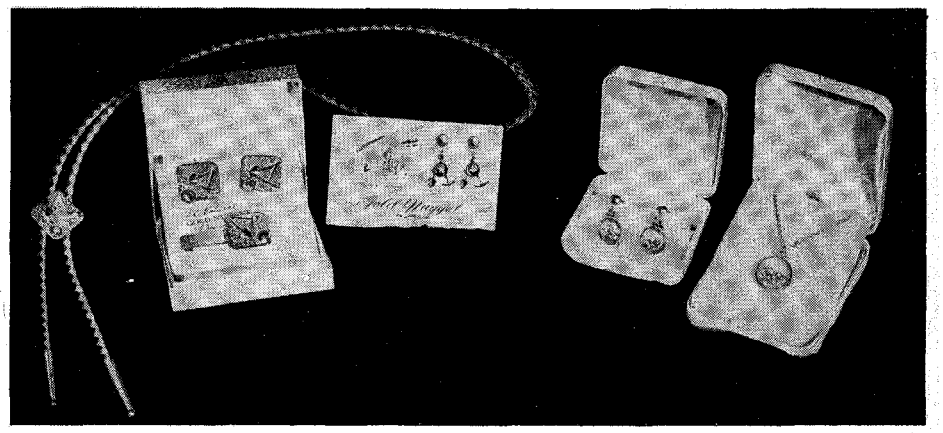
Sebe pulled to the left and urged the team. They didn't want to turn sideways to the wind and sleet, but Sebe managed to make them move. Almost immediately we started down grade and in less than half a minute were below the plains level.

Sebe turned the team to the right, and we scrambled down onto a bench, high above the bottom of the canyon, but two hundred feet below the top of a precipice of solid rock.

The wind roared far above us but there was no gust that reached to our level. The snow fell in sheets about us, but dropped calmly straight down. And there, by our good luck, was the camp. The teamsters had pitched the tents—a courtesy extended only in time of stress—and Old Bill had a fire going and supper was well on the way.

AFTER we had thawed out and moved around a bit, one of the boys noticed a cleft in the face of the precipice about thirty feet above its base, and in the cleft were three or four dead cedars. He threw a blazing piece of wood into the dry limbs, and it hung there and set fire to one of the trees. In a short time we had a roaring torch fifty or sixty feet tall. We ate supper by its light and shortly thereafter the trees burnt off from the stumps, and a wonderful avalanche of flaming wood and coals piled itself at the base of the rock. It burnt for hours and warmed quite a large space around camp.

When we had finished "first smoke," P. G. announced that he had a new novel by "The Duchess" and would read to us. We helped Old Bill wash the dishes so that he could hear the story, he being



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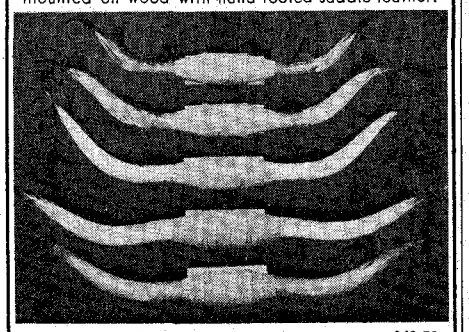

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naturally romantic and a great admirer of The Duchess.

The light from the great fire was sufficient, and we gathered around P. G. and listened as he read of real high-toned society folk—even an occasional nobleman and titled lady—who entered the scenes with perfect grace and beauty and who made love in a most delicate and refined way. It was all so different from what we knew!

Late at night, while P. G. was reading a very tender passage, he was interrupted by a maniacal chorus of shrieks and howls—deep-throated, menacing, and terrifying. The reading ceased until the pack had yelled their way a long distance from our sheltering bank over the snow-covered plain. The lobo wolves were hungry and were hunting.

Again P. G.'s voice took us back to the tenderness and beauty of the Irish land, and we thrilled with the hero and laughed with "Dickey Browne."

The light from the fire died down, but the glowing coals still melted the snow around us. Old Bill lit a lantern and placed it on a tomato box by P. G.'s shoulder.

The Duchess was no mean writer, and her description of garden fetes, picnics, balls, and love-making gripped and held us. We were all young, in years at least, and each one saw himself the hero of the tale, and each made the delicate remarks at the proper time, and, at the end, each of us thrilled to the kiss of promise of the lovely heroine.

P. G. finished the tale and we sat awhile in blissful silence. Then Dave murmured:

"That's a hum-dinger of a love story!"

"Let's go to Ireland on a cattle boat," suggested Martin.

"Sure! Let's!"

P. G. looked at his watch. "Good Gracious! It's past one o'clock! Merry Christmas!"

We shook hands all around. Old Bill sighed deeply.

"It sure started fine, Chief. I looked at my watch, just at twelve, and that cuss was putting his arm around that lady for the first time, and it was a Christmas Eve and she wished him 'Merry Christmas.' Doggone the luck! G'night."

I'm Sick of Lost Mines!

(Continued from page 21)

parts haven't been hostile for almost a century. The only curse he fears is the one you'll give him when you return, knowing what a sucker you've been. Usually, you do *not* return. You quickly perceive that you have been taken for a cleaning, so you quietly move on without kicking up a row. You prudently bypass the place from which you departed, as you don't want to get the horse laugh from the local yokels. You simply "disappear," and credulous people mark up another "mysterious fatality" to the credit of the Dutchman's Lost Mine, or to some other famous mine, as the case may be. Beautifully simple, isn't it?

If these yarns were about real mines, then the mines could most likely be found. Real backing is easy to obtain for a real prospect. Strip the mines and the treasures of the baloney of mystery, phony spirits, and curses, the bugaboo of desert heat, Gila monsters, and lurking "still wild" Indians, and there isn't enough interest left to arouse more than a polite yawn and the whole promotion venture fails. You must have glamour for selling a gold brick.

Take, for instance, my friend "Professor" Kleinschmidt and the "Lost Inca Mine." He really told a good story, and I watched it bud, grow, and flower through the years. The Professor made a precarious living through this mine; he knew right where it was and he'd tell you at the flash of a twenty dollar bill. In spite of the German monicker and his proud boast of having been a professor of languages, the gentleman was of Italian ancestry and quite innocent of more than the bare rudiments of any language. But he had the wit and imagination of a natural confidence man, and here is how he operated:

An old Spanish cannon had been found in the vicinity of this mine, or at least in the same country. Over the years, this cannon was found closer and closer to this mine until—mysteriously—it was discovered right in the mine itself. Soon the cannon—or as the Professor called it, the "canyon"—took on added significance of guarding the gold in the mine. This mine had a shaft going down to the water level and then a drift going out along the water table. To the Professor's fertile mind, the "canyon" suggested "canoe," and soon he had the old mine being worked from a canoe going up and down that drift. He, personally, had seen the canoe, etc, etc.

Well, now, that was a good story; it laid over anything I had ever heard along such lines and that was plenty. The Professor even showed me where the mine was. Of course it had fallen in at the time and he was just about to reopen it, if and when he got some backing. The gold was down there for the taking, and even the customary curse had been lifted. Seems that a circuit riding priest or minister had traveled that way and, in exchange for lodging, had blessed the site. This, of course, had chased the less powerful spirits away, and now all one needed was the cash for the development work.

THE PROFESSOR carefully avoided contacting any real mining outfits, since they had engineers who would give the place one look and put it down as an unlikely site for finding anything of value. Obviously it is no coincidence that so many "lost mines" are located out in sandstone or shale country or out in the midst of thick basalt flows. As far as I know, mining history does not record mineral wealth in such country. One of my friends insists that he can show me free milling gold in basalt. I am still waiting for this sight, and it has been twenty years now since the declaration was first made. My friend knows exactly where it is, but he cannot take time off from his barber shop to go out there and get rich. Now if *I* knew of such a bonanza within a hundred miles, I believe I could find time for a short vacation—one long enough to gather up a few millions.

Prosperous mining country hardly ever has a lost mine anywhere. Lost mines almost always occur in old mined out areas or in places where the mines failed to live up to reasonable promise. In such "busted" country, the stories are as thick as leprechauns in Ireland and just as authentic. The legends almost always refer to lost gold mines, since there is something irresistibly exciting about gold. Fifty years from now I have little doubt that the accent will be on lost uranium mines; styles in sucker-baiting

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change just as everything else. For the gent who shuns work, there will always be the lost treasure of the Incas or the Padres or of who-have-you. Lost treasures are most popular with the sucker trade, since the treasure is usually already minted and, therefore, easier to convert into large bills and Cadillacs. Mines usually presuppose some work to digging the gold out, and work should be avoided if at all possible.

Some years back we had a big lost treasure promotion not far from where I live in New Mexico. A woman filed an application to hunt for it. Her late husband had hidden the loot, and she knew where it was. The wealth was in romantic gold bars, and by some slip of the tongue the huntress admitted that the bars were badly tarnished. Could be that her late husband had a few brass bricks stacked away somewhere awaiting some get-rich-quick sucker with more money than brains. Incidentally, there was a certain aura of mystery about the demise of her late lamented. The mystery chiefly concerned which one of the several husbands of a certain community came home unexpectedly and armed with a high-powered rifle. The treasure owner had been found dead in an alley, with his trousers and shoes clutched in his hands. Ah, me; flight over the back fence is a poor substitute for thorough investigation as to whether the husband of one's *inamorata* really *has* left town! A truly clever Casanova would never have been so careless.

GETTING back to my main topic: I have lived around mining sections for many years and have heard so many wild tales that I can practically quote them back to the teller as soon as he sounds off. The tales are chiefly amazing because of their utter lack of originality. I get particularly irritated with the old chestnut that starts with the "old prospector" befriending the dying Indian chief who possesses the secret which has been handed down for generations. You can bet your sweet life that the chief would have converted his knowledge into something more substantial a long time ago. I crave originality in these yarns. Once I even figured that *I* would try my hand at telling one with a different twist.

In 1936 I was on a geology trip through western Nevada. At an old busted mining town I paused to get the latest pipe dream from one of the old prospectors. He told me one—and on the spur of the moment, I swapped him one of my own. My story involved the fabulously rich mine (you *must* have that), the old prospector heading to town for supplies, the marking of the mine canyon by a post on top of which was a pan of sourdough bread. The prospector aimed to return by evening. He got lost in the desert as he returned loaded with imbibed liquor. Two days later he was found in the desert raving in delirium. He told enough to start the search. Four men found the post and the sourdough bread and traveled up the canyon to the mine. It was extremely rich, and while three men excitedly gouged out chunks of raw gold the fourth drew a bead on their backs with a pistol and blazed away. He killed all three of his partners and then *he* was the sole owner. Well, the story goes on from there with whatever hokum I could think up. When I'd finished, the "old prospector" looked at me with grudging respect such as Ananias might have paid to Baron Munchausen.

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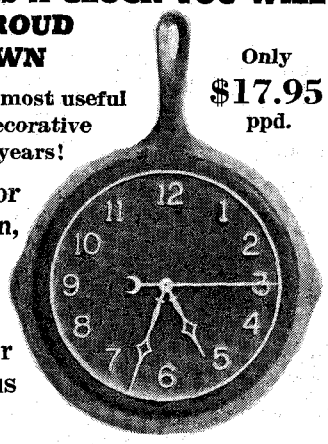

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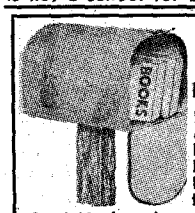

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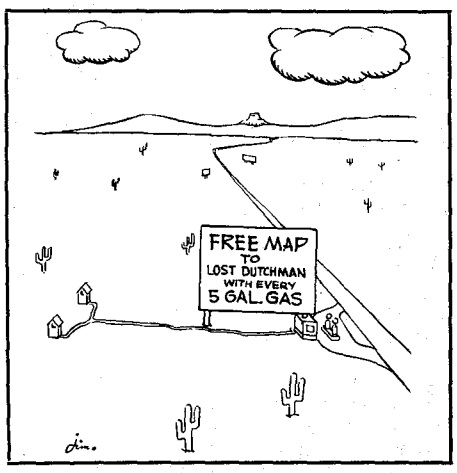
A YEAR AGO I paid another visit to that busted Nevada mining town. There I talked with the local citizens concerning mining activities, now entirely a thing of the past. One of the aged men told me with great gusto the story of the "Lost Sourdough Bread Mine"! Back my story came to me, almost as I had told it twenty years before. The old man had never seen the mine himself, but he had a friend who had a friend who had a map. I invited the local miners into the saloon for a drink and really got the lowdown on the mine I had "lost" back in 1936. For a suitable cash consideration I am sure that several of the men might have produced a map for me. I departed with a singular satisfaction. When I started that story, I had no idea that I was giving something to posterity. I suppose I felt a little like Shakespeare did when he found that *Julius Caesar* was a play that could be played more than one night.

Yes, fellow readers of *True West,* I'm heartily sick of lost mines and buried treasures. Yet, like yourselves, I still read about them. I've even read a few books concerning them, and here too I always feel that a greater originality should be displayed in the telling. Even legitimate mining operations have to be carefully watched sometimes. Mark Twain once said: "A mine is a hole in the ground owned by a liar." The saying is truer today than it was in Mark's day. Sure, lost mines and buried treasures make excellent reading—but you had better take your pleasure in the reading and let it go at that. No matter how thin you slice baloney it is still baloney.

Publisher's Note:

Come on boys—we're too young to starve! Somebody has undoubtedly found a lost mine or a buried treasure in the last hundred years! Tell us about it.



I Spent Christmas on A Horse

(Continued from page 9)

to the Moore ranch, a distance of about five miles. I made it okay.

TOM MOORE saw me ride up and came out to bid me welcome, for visitors were few at that lonely ranch. He told me it had been many days since they had seen another human being—and now it had to be on Christmas Day, with a sad message like mine.

In those times every ranch was a place to eat and rest, whether the traveler be friend or stranger. Tom invited me in to eat the best Christmas dinner I ever had, for I was plenty hungry and cold. First he stabled my horse at a manger full of hay; then took me inside the house to meet the family and sit down at table with them.

We had deer meat, potatoes, gravy, and hot biscuits. Tom's few cattle were too valuable to be butchered for personal use, so Tom got meat for the table with his rifle—elk, deer, antelope, sage chickens, and rabbits. He had no money with which to buy a turkey; no place to buy one anyhow. Even the ranchers with money bought groceries only twice a year—spring and fall, if the ranches were in the isolated back country, as many were. For some ranchers it was a trip of several days with a two or four-horse team and wagon.

Tom was too broke to go to the funeral, but he wrote his answer to the telegram after dinner and silently handed it to me. I started back at once, as I was worried about being caught on those Plains in the storm after dark.

My horse plodded slowly up the canyon head-on into the storm. We had gone but a mile or so when I noticed he was getting jumpy and uneasy. This shouldn't have happened to a tired mount bucking a blizzard. I looked back to see two big gray lobo wolves on our trail. These were ugly devils, sometimes called buffalo wolves, as they stand higher at the shoulders than at the hindquarters. From then on I rode with my chin over my shoulder, waiting for them to make a move. There was nothing I could do. I dared not urge my horse to a faster gait, too many tough miles remained ahead and he might play out entirely if I pushed him. Anyhow, the wolves could have kept up with us easily even if I *had* spooked and went to quirting my horse.

So I just plugged along, with the wolves getting bolder and closer. Apparently by this time they had figured out that I had no gun and was harmless. (Today, forty-six years later, I still wonder how a wolf can tell when a man or an animal is weak and near exhaustion.)

When we reached the wire gate at the head of the canyon and the edge of the Plains, we were really in trouble. The wolves were now only a few feet behind me—so close I was afraid to get off my horse to open the gate. *Now,* I thought desperately, *if only I had another rider with me and we had fresh horses, we could rope them both. Twenty-five bucks apiece bounty for wolves—and we cowboys could use that kind of dough!*

Crazy thinking in a spot like mine—but the thought gave me an idea. A lariat rope is always a good weapon, and mine was on the saddle as always. I took it off, spilled the loop out of the end—I didn't want to catch one of them—and turned my horse to face them. Yelling like a Comanche on the warpath, I dismounted and threw the end of the rope at the ornery critters. The wolves crouched and snarled, then whirled and took out. A short distance only, but they retreated. Still hollering and waving the rope, I got the gate open, led my horse through, closed the gate—we don't leave gates open in my country—mounted and rode off.

I guess the wolves figured the pair of us weren't as weak as we appeared to be, for they didn't come through the fence after us. But our troubles were not over. The storm had a hundred-mile sweep across the Laramie Plains, and we had to face it. Our dim trail was soon lost in the deep snow; ten miles to go with visibility zero. (That phrase hadn't been coined in 1911!)

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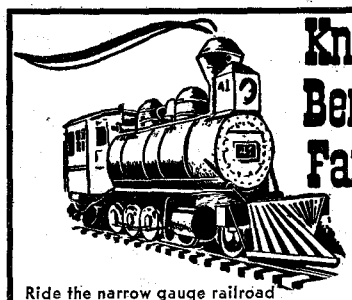

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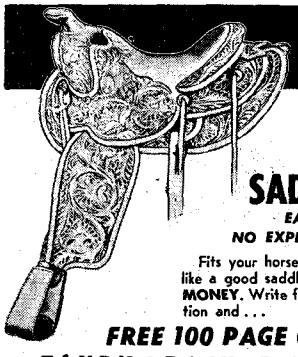

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WHEN a rider is lost, a good horse will generally take him home if given his head. However, horses don't like to face a storm, and I wasn't sure whether mine would or not. I figured it was safer and smarter to keep him facing the wind. This is good policy only if the wind doesn't change direction, but I had to take that chance.

I did some fast calculating. The Laramie River crosses this desolate stretch of plains, and the ranch was on the river. So—if I could hit the river, all I would have to figure was whether I was up or downstream from the ranch. A helluva gamble, but at least I'd have a fifty-fifty chance of being right. Somehow the odds didn't seem so good when my life was at stake.

My horse's eyelids froze shut and ice formed in his nostrils. Feeling sorry for the poor cuss, I got off and wiped his eyes and nose. I felt sorry for me, too; I had the same trouble. The horse was more important; I knew that without him I'd never leave these blizzard-swept plains alive. Maybe neither of us would get out alive—but I tried not to think of that.

Darkness fell, but we still headed into the wind. No way of telling how far we had come nor how far we had to go, nor even if we were going in the right direction. It was the doggondest lonesomest feeling to know that somewhere off in the howling dark your buddies were sitting in a warm bunkhouse and wondering if you were ever going to show up alive . . . I quit thinking that way—but then I got to thinking about Portugee Phillips and the long winter ride he made from Fort Phil Kearney to Fort Laramie in 1866. Phillips' horse collapsed and died when he reached Laramie. I wondered if mine could keep going. He did—and we hit the river.

I couldn't tell whether we were upstream or downstream from the ranch, so I decided to let the horse figure it out. I got off, held a loose rein though I was chilled to the bone and the horse about to quit. *Walking will warm me up a mite, and the weight off will help the horse,* I thought dully to myself as I plodded along.

It was the right hunch; that good, good horse led me right to the ranch about a half-mile away. The boys whooped when they saw me, stripped off my icy clothes and hustled me into my bunk. And just like Portugee Phillips had said in 1866, I mumbled: "Never mind me, take care of my horse!"

A fiction story would end here at the dramatic high point, but this is truth so there's more to tell. I'd seen that Tom Moore was having it tough out there in that wild country. More especially, his wife and kids were having it tough, for Tom could take it even though his boots had a gaping hole in the side and he was walking practically barefoot in the snow.

I think the Moores had purposely failed to tell the children that it was Christmas, for there was no way they could observe it. Those kids had but one toy, a ball that Mrs. Moore had sewed out of rags. When I told the boys the story, they passed the hat and collected a right substantial stake. We went to town and bought those kids a whole bag full of toys for a belated Merry Christmas. I had the privilege of delivering the toys; told the kids old Santa Claus had been delayed by the blizzard. You never saw such surprise and joy on kids' faces in your life! I never enjoyed *any* Christmas

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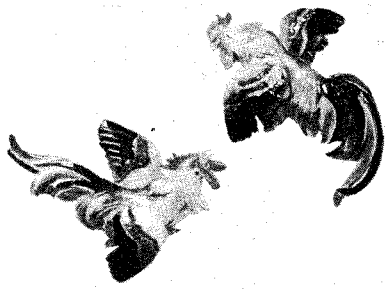

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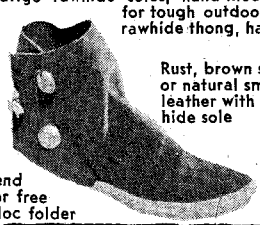

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as much as that one. Made a man misty-eyed just to watch those happy kids whoop it up.

Tom's little herd grew and multiplied. The last I heard of him, he had a modern home, an automobile, and had put the kids through college. And, like so many Westerners, he did it all with his own two hands and the help of a loyal, loving, hard-working wife and family.

Brigadier General Kit Carson. Photo courtesy Mrs. William Carson.

Green River Shindig

(Continued from page 13)

BRIGHT and early next morning, Kit presented himself at Running Around's tepee to ask for Waa-nibe in marriage. The old chief sat before his fire inscrutably smoking his pipe while young Carson pressed his case. "I can give your daughter fine clothes and a good lodge. I will pay two good horses for her, a gun, and ammunition. What do you say?"

Running Around grunted. "I do not say, white man. Waa-nibe has older brother, Short Man. He fine warrior—*he* say."

"Where is Short Man?" demanded Kit.

The old man shrugged. "Here—there—everywhere. Ask the prairie wind, white man."

Kit knew that Running Around was making fun of him, but he knew he must not get angry or all would be lost. "When will Short Man be back?" he asked evenly.

"Ai-ee," smiled Running Around. "Today—tomorrow—any time!"

Kit was discouraged. *Wagh*—love-making was worse than trapping beaver and saving your hair from the Blackfeet! Waa-nibe had plenty of shine, and—since last night—he knew she loved him. She would make a wonderful wife, but this old rascal of a father was too slippery for him.

The flap of the lodge door was suddenly thrown back, and Short Man strode in. Seeing a white man there, he turned to leave. Running Around raised a hand. "Wait, my son. I would talk to you."

Scowling, the young warrior sat down. He listened stony-faced while his father explained the purpose of Kit's visit.

"No!" snapped Short Man, "he cannot have her. All white men are evil, and trappers are the worst. Soon I shall take the war trail and lift a lot of white scalps."

"What has happened to make your heart so bad against white men?" asked Kit. "Was it the Soup Dance last night? Tell me, my brother."

Short Man was so angry he did not want to talk about it. Kit persisted, offering a twist of tobacco. Reluctantly Short Man accepted the gift and filled his pipe.

"It's that great red-haired beast, Bad Medicine," he said finally. "He is a dog! The other night he attempted to disrobe Waa-nibe. Only blood, much white blood, can wipe out the stain on Arapaho honor. No, I cannot consent to her going with you. All trappers are evil!"

Kit said no more. Now that he saw how the stick floated, he knew what to do. Back to the rendezvous he galloped, his blue eyes cold as ice. Upon arriving at his camp, he found that the big French-Canadian had beaten two of his men to a pulp.

"Whar is he?" he inquired calmly.

"Over yonder by the trader's tent," was the reply. "He's all likkered up and a-howlin' for blood."

Kit walked toward the trader's tent, armed only with a knife.

SHUNAN saw him coming and leaped into the air, flapping his arms and crowing like a rooster, "I'm a rip-roarin', head-bustin', eye-gougin', wampus cat!" he roared. "I can whip any man in ze world! Ze *Americains* are skunks, cowards, squaws. Not one of zem will fight me!"

Kit strode up to the huge Frenchman. *"I'm* an American, Shunan, and I ain't skeered of you. You're a fake—a big bag of wind! Your carcass is as big as a buffalo, but your heart's no bigger than a mouse. I know what you tried to do to Waa-nibe, you stinkin' varmint. Keep your filthy paws off'n her, or I'll rip your guts out and choke you to death with 'em!"

Such fighting talk from quiet Kit Carson would have sobered the average man instantly, but not Shunan. Yet, for some reason, the hulking bully refused Kit's challenge of immediate combat. Instead, he ran to his camp, seized his rifle, mounted his horse, and rode out on the nearby prairie.

Now Shunan's courage returned; he began spewing coarse insults upon all Americans in general and Kit Carson in particular. Then he switched his diatribe, bawling out with drunken zeal the lewd details of what he planned to do to Waa-nibe that very night.

"Wagh!" growled old Parson Bill Williams. "If some galoot don't crawl that kiyote's frame mighty soon, I'll do it myself. I air an old man, but I ain't goin' to take much more. It ain't decent for any man to talk that way about a woman, even if she air a pore benighted heathen."

"Rest easy, Bill," said Kit. "I aim to clip his foul tongue right now."

Swiftly, Kit ran to his camp, grabbed a single-shot pistol, flung himself upon his buffalo runner, and galloped out on the prairie.

"Thar goes young David agin Goliath," crowed Parson Bill, "an' my beaver's on *him*. Anybody want to bet a good pack-horse agin my Nez Perce pony that Kit won't make him come?"

The bet was instantly covered.

"Bet my Hawken rifle agin another pack-horse," announced Bill.

This bet too was quickly covered. Williams grinned and wagered in rapid succession his whole outfit—traps, powder, lead, everything.

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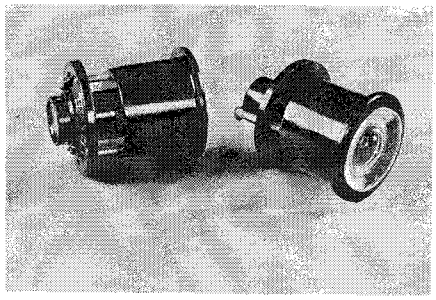

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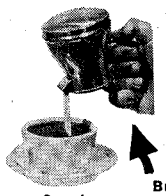

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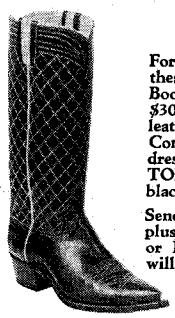

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"Wal, now," remarked John Hatcher, trader for William Bent, "looks like we're goin' to have a mite of excitement. A bang-up funeral will be fust-rate. Win or lose, Parson Bill can wag his jaw over the corpse."

Shunan saw Kit coming, and rode forward to meet him. The Frenchman's bluster had evaporated; for the first time he seemed to realize that he was in for something far deadlier than a rough-and-tumble fight.

STRAIGHT up to Shunan rode Kit. When he pulled in, the shoulders of their horses were touching. "Air I the man you're talkin' about?" he softly inquired.

The muzzle of Shunan's rifle shifted. *"Sacre bleu!"* he snarled. Rifle and pistol spoke together.

Simultaneously with the report of the weapons, Kit flung himself far to one side. Parson Bill saw the movement and swore bitterly, thinking his friend had been killed. Deftly, Kit whirled his horse and raced for camp, seized another pistol, and galloped back toward Shunan. As he passed a group of watching trappers, they saw one side of his face was bloody where the Frenchman's bullet had grazed his cheek.

Shunan remained numbly where Kit had left him, one wounded arm hanging helplessly at his side. Imploringly, at young Carson's approach, he raised his hand in the peace sign. If Kit saw it he chose to ignore the sign. While he was yet some rods distant, his pistol cracked. Shunan rolled to the ground.

Kit yanked his horse to a sliding stop and sprang to earth, Green River knife in hand.

"Hold on thar, Kit!" yelled Parson Bill. "He's your meat, but it ain't natural for one white man to scalp another."

Kit let go of Shunan's hair and slid the knife back into its sheath. "Reckon you're right, Bill," he replied. "Let the dead skunk wear his fur."

Next morning, John Hatcher and the boys enjoyed the bang-up funeral given Shunan. Old Parson Bill, who had cleaned up on Kit's victory in the duel, wagged his bristled jaw for half an hour on the theme "The Wages of Sin is Death." Then they wrapped the corpse in a buffalo robe and buried him, had a few slugs of Taos Lightning by way of celebration, and called the affair a walloping success.

Kit did not attend the funeral; instead, he rode upriver to the Arapaho camp. Short Man shook hands with him, motioned him to a seat beside Waa-nibe, and joined in a smoke. Kit declared that Bad Medicine was dead, restated his love for the girl and again named the many presents he would give for her.

"Hou—hou!" grunted Running Around in approval. Short Man grinned and shook Kit's hand again, sealing the bargain. With a broad smile on his leathery old face, Running Around dropped his blanket over the pair of young lovers. That constituted the marriage ceremony.

The wedding over, Running Around went outside and fired his gun in the air to draw a crowd. When the people came, the old chief proudly displayed the five Nor'west blankets, the fine new gun, Shunan's horse, and a sleek pony; all of which his new son-in-law had given him.

Within an hour everybody at the rendezvous, red and white, knew that Kit Carson had taken a woman to keep his lodge.

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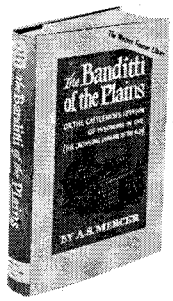

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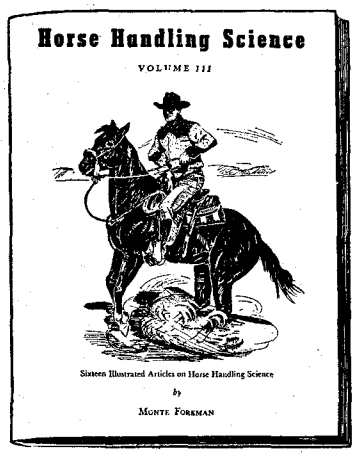

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WESTERN BOOK ROUNDUP

By The Old Bookaroos

RANCHING—SOUTH

Tom Lea's *The King Ranch* (Little, Brown, $17.50) is a handsome two-volume set that provides top reading. Here is history, based on careful research and thoroughly annotated, that is as exciting as fiction. Author Tom Lea is a man of many talents—he was a well-known artist-illustrator when he turned novelist to produce the best sellers, *The Brave Bulls* (Little, Brown, 1949), and *The Wonderful Country(* Little, Brown, 1952). With *The King Ranch* he has definitely established the right to the title, "Historian." He had the research assistance of Holland McCombs—and Francis L. Fugate provided the annotations, but Tom was his own illustrator. And it is easy to see that he has lost none of his skill with pen and brush since turning more to writing—the drawings are just plain wonderful, though far too few in number to satisfy this Lea fan.

But despite the great size of the ranch, these books are primarily about people—the founder, tough but fair Capt. Richard King; his friend, Capt. Mifflin Kenedy; and King's first ranch partner, the fabulous "Legs" Lewis, Texas Ranger, newspaper owner, and real estate speculator who, while a candidate for Congress, was shot down (apologetically) by an irate husband—"Legs" had seduced his wife. Two other well-known Captains of the Texas Rangers, "Rip" Ford and L. H. McNelly, were involved from time to time in protecting the ranch from Mexican raiders.

Volume two tells the story of the Klebergs—Robert, the astute young lawyer, who was named ranch manager by Mrs. King on the death of the Captain (Robert married the Kings' daughter, Alice); their sons: Bob, the present manager, and the late Dick, long-time Congressman; and the third generation Klebergs who are now in training to take over when their time comes.

It is also the story of Santa Gertrudis cattle, the only breed developed in America, and of King Ranch horses—Old Sorrel and Wimpy, the famous Quarter Horse sires, and the Thoroughbreds, including triple-crown winner Assault. It is the story of grass—Rhodes, KR bluestem, Kleberg bluestem—and of brush eradication and of cactus. And it is the story of skillful and dedicated Mexican vaqueros unto the fourth generation, who have handled King Ranch cattle since the beginning in 1853.

The King Ranch is no longer pure Texan—there is a horse farm in Kentucky, more than 4,000 acres of grass in Pennsylvania, a ranch in Cuba, one in Australia, and another in Brazil. But this two-volume set is mighty pure—it was designed by Carl Hertzog of El Paso, a real pro, and printed and bound in Texas. In addition to being great history, this is a magnificently done job of bookmaking that will delight all lovers of fine typography. Simply superb!

RANCHING—NORTH

John O. Bye, one of the last of the honored breed of old-time cowmen, recently recorded his cowboying experiences in the unique new book called *Backtrailing in the Heart of the Short Grass Country,* (John O. Bye, 2743 East 103rd, Seattle 55, Washington, $6.)

In writing his cow country memoirs, Johnny Bye has employed unusual innovations as to format, style, and chronology. There are nearly four hundred pages crammed with intimate details about every day affairs of people that pioneered in the Northern Great Plains and the Northwest. One cowboy reader claims to have recognized the names of over 400 people included within these pages. Two maps to help locate ranches, towns, and cattle trails are included.

Backtrailing also includes accounts of Texas-born cowmen who trailed she-stock and steers out of crowded Texas ranges to northern grass. Some of the southern brands that established cow outfits in the north were the Mill Iron, XIT, Turkey Track, Hash Knife, Matador, TL, and Long X.

Bye's book is a depository of dates, places, names, cattle brands, and events which will provide a rich source of information for future western writers and historians. It is enhanced with prose, poetry, and ballads of the author and those of his two literary compatriots—Badger Clark of South Dakota, and E. A. Brininstool of California.

Western libraries and cattle collectors should ignore the rather unsatisfactory format of this book—the authentic details of range life make it a must.

RANCHING—SCOTTISH

Of Sheep and Men (Knopf, $5) by Dr. R. B. Robertson is a thoroughly entertaining book. Dr. Robertson, of pure Scottish ancestry, was born in Egypt but spent his school years in Scotland. This is the story of a sheep year in the Scottish Border country. Dr. Robertson and his American-born wife were involved in every phase of sheep raising—at times voluntarily, and at others, with considerable reluctance but involved by the canny herds never-the-less. During the year the Robertsons became fully accepted members of the small community and as a result accumulated a tremendous amount of sheep raising knowledge and lore. Dr. Robertson writes very well indeed and Mrs. Robertson is an expert photographer. There are 15 fine half-tones after her photos used in the book and these are good enough to make you want at least that many more. This is a book for everyone interested in sheep and wool. And for everyone who has a bit of Scottish blood who wants to know about present day life in the Border glens. Definitely recommended.

OUR WEST!

This Is The West (The New American Library, 35c), edited by Robert West Howard for the Chicago Corral of The Westerners, is the biggest 35c worth offered in many a year. There are more Western facts packed in this attractive paper-back than any volume known to this reviewer. And what a list

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of authors dynamic Bob Howard lined up to present the various phases of Western life!—it is almost a roll call of Who's Who of Western historians and writers. Walter Prescott Webb, Stanley Vestal, Jim Horan, Oren Arnold, Wayne Gard, Badger Clark, Ramon Adams, Colonel Eddie Wentworth and his cousin, Charles Towne, Homer Croy, and Omar Barker are among the 25 authors. "The Westerners: A Directory of Their International Corrals" is a special feature of real interest to all Westerners. Don't miss this bargain.

Buckskin and Blanket Days (Doubleday, $4.50) is the autobiography of Thomas Henry Tibbles, primarily a pioneer Western newspaperman and writer. However, he did what came naturally in those early days of the West and was on occasion soldier, scout, buffalo hunter, preacher, and politician. Above all, he was a friend of the Indians and enjoyed their confidence. As a result, he set down numerous facts of much interest to present day historians. His second wife was Bright Eyes, an Omaha Princess, who shared his work in behalf of Indian relief. This book was written in 1905 and the mss was edited by Mrs. Theodora Bates Cogswell, whose brother married Tibble's daughter. It is good that these zestful memoirs have at long last reached print.

Lulu Rasmussen O'Neal's *A Peculiar Piece of Desert* (Westernlore, $7.50) is a scholarly yet real interesting story of California's Morongo Basin. This spur of the Mojave is high desert country hidden among the mountain ranges. The altitude (2,000-4,000 feet) plus the influence of the mountains are responsible for the rather unique flora and fauna of the Morongo. And, of course, there are tales of lost mines, desert rats (for example, Old Quartz Wilson), and the Indians who were there first. The book is nicely illustrated with photographs, and there is a good bibliography plus an adequate index. This is an all-round good job of bookmaking, up to the usual Westernlore standard—and that's plenty high.

The Columbia River (University of Oklahoma Press, $5.75) by Ross Cox, edited and with an introduction by Edgar I. Stewart, is a high-hearted lusty narrative. Ross landed at Astoria, May, 1812, and his detailed diaries cover a new set of historic experiences in this wilderness environment for which the gracious living of his youth had ill-prepared him. With luck and aid of weather-wise and trail-worthy guides and fur trappers, he survived a vicissitude of harrowing experiences with frenzied Indians, frostbite, outlaws, hunger, and unchartered wilderness routes. Despite his virginal innocence, a legacy from a puritanical background, Ross had an avid curiosity and a sharp eye for details.

GUNFIGHTER-SPORTS WRITER

Richard O'Connor's *Bat Masterson* (Doubleday, $3.75) is a thoroughly competent biography about one of the legendary gunfighters of the Old West. The fact that Bat became a real good sports writer in New York City after the wild days were gone is not so well known. Bat was at the famous Second Battle of Adobe Walls in 1874 and later served as a scout for General Nelson A. Miles in the Staked Plains campaign of 1875. Ben Thompson was his friend and he served as a deputy marshal under Wyatt Earp (many years later Wyatt

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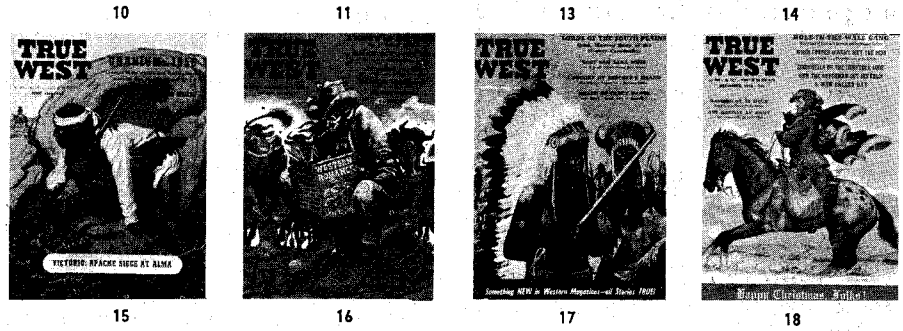
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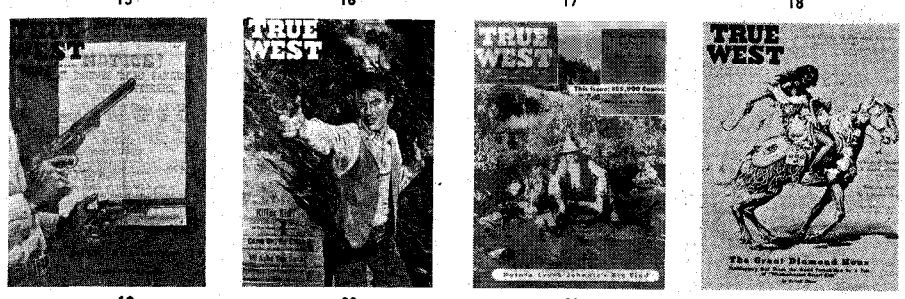
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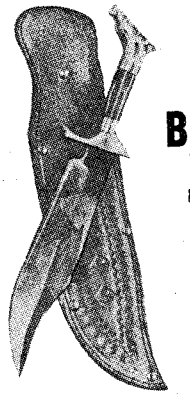

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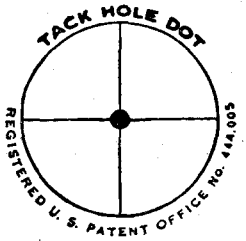

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told of some of Bat's doings as being his own). Clay Allison, Doc Holliday, Luke Short, Dave Rudabaugh (who later rode with Billy the Kid), and other notorious characters crossed Bat's path while he was a Western gambler and peace officer. This is an interesting book.

W. M. MORRISON

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The Mezcla Man

(Continued from page 11)

out his middle finger and out his little finger, trying, trying to locate the right place on the ground to dig for the gold. They even sighted out to a hill five miles away and dug a hole there. They cut paths through the brush east and west. But after they had dug and dug and found nothing, they became disgusted and quit.

Then the *pastores* began grazing their sheep up to the Cerro del Rico. Each had a shepherd dog with his flock. The way to train a dog to guard sheep is to take him away from his mother before he opens his eyes and let him suck a ewe. When he grows up, he thinks he is a sheep and will not let a coyote or anything else bother his kinspeople. These *pastores* would leave their dogs to care for the sheep and go up the hill and dig all day long. They dug new holes and they dug the old holes deeper. But they did not find anything, and after a while they became disgusted and quit coming.

Only one old *pastor* did not quit. He was more wise and had more knowledge than any of the other *pastores*. He knew what it meant when the coyotes howled on top of the hills after sunup instead of in the valleys before daybreak. He knew what it meant when the bullbats were thick in the evening air. He knew what it meant when rattlesnakes crawled around in the middle of a hot summer's day instead of remaining asleep in the shade of bushes. He said that when a *paisano* (roadrunner) stopped suddenly while running down a trail, stood on one leg, and bowed his head, he was praying—praying for rain, perhaps. He could make better medicines than anybody else out of the leaves of the gray *cenizo* plant, the bark of the huisache tree, and the roots of the leather weed. He could read in the stars, and also, it was said, he could read an almanac. He was very astute, very wise.

So he kept on coming to that high hill and digging. Every morning he would put his gourd of water down at the *mezcla* man's feet, take his grubbing hoe and spade, and then for hours dig, dig, dig. He made some of the old holes deeper and he put down new holes. Meanwhile his shepherd dog kept the sheep out on the prairie.

One hot day after he had been working very hard and was very thirsty and tired, he came in from his diggings to drink from the gourd. He took the stopper made out of shucks from its mouth and, while his head was raised up to receive the water, his eyes fell again on the writing upon the *mezcla* man's breast. He had read it many times, but he read it again out loud: "Dig out to the east and the west the way my hands are pointing and you will find the gold."

AFTER he had done drinking, the *pastor* regarded the writing for a long time. He read it again, over and over. At last he said, speaking to the man of mud and sticks in front of him:

"Why, the robbers came here and found you and read what you say and dug out to the east and the west, and they did not find any gold. Then all the rich and important *rancheros* in the country came. They had confidence in your word, and they dug out to the east and west, and they did not find gold. Then after they quit, the *pastores* still believed you, and they dug more holes and made the old holes deeper. But they did not find any gold. And I! Well, here I have been listening to you and digging my arms off for over a year, and I have never found so much as a copper *centavo*.

"Why, you are just an old billy goat of a liar!" Then he slapped him on his big mouth.

The *pastor* was very indignant. "Shameless one," he said, "it is not with your mouth that you deceive. Right now your lying to honest people will end."

He seized his spade and hacked off the head of that *mezcla* man with his wide-open mouth. Then he chopped off the right arm, which pointed to the east, and then the left arm, which pointed to the west. And then, *wow!* he came with all his might down through the words on the *mezcla* man's breast and into his enormous stomach.

And when he did, the gold coins and some silver coins too just poured out on the ground. They were so heavy that the *pastor* could not carry them all. You see, the cunning old ranchero had built the man to hold plenty, and then he had fed him through his open mouth until he was full.

"Elojio," I asked when he thus ended his story, "what did the *pastor* do with so much money?"

"Oh, he gave his master some of it, and he kept the rest, and he never had to herd sheep any more. He went back on the other side of the river into his own country, and there he lived *muy contento* all the rest of his life."

And very contented I now rode on with Elojio.

"Some days it don't pay fer a feller to get outta bed!"

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From the Pen of Calamity Jane

(Continued from page 25)

October, 1890

The O'Neils changed your name to Jean Irene but to me you are always Janey. The years are going fast. So many things have happened since I wrote last in this book. More than anything I cherish my visit to see you and your Daddy Jim. He is such a fine man, that Jim O'Neil, and I am so glad you have such a nice home. I am driving a stagecoach these days. Some mighty awful experiences I've had since I started this kind of work. Rev. Sipes and Teddy Blue Abbott got me the job. They seemed to think it was better than being a saloon hostess. You see, your mother works for a living. One day I have chicken to eat and the next day the feathers.

I ran into Jack Dalton yesterday. He is supposed to be an outlaw, but down deep in his heart he's good. He would divide his last penny with any of his old cronies. He looks like a few scars remained of some of his scraps. He was in the saloon when your own father was killed in Deadwood. A turbulent career of gun frays he could boast of, but he is no braggart. This is all for tonight.

November 17, 1900

My Darling Janey:

Here I am in Colorado. Have been treated like a queen while here on the Collins ranch. They are nice people and I shall never regret coming here. Have been up in the Big Thompson Canyon on a hunting trip. I like it here in Colorado. If I had my choice this would be my state to live in. My writing is getting worse all the time, Janey. My hands and arms are so numb at times I can hardly write. I told these people here about the frame up on Wild Bill at Deadwood. Don't forget that it was all cut and dried to get him out of the way . . . hired that idiot McCall to . . . him. But they concluded that it wouldn't look so good if they let him escape the second time, so they hung him. He told me about it and said he was paid one thousand dollars to do it. He said he cached the gold in one of the dirty Dutchman's shacks in the gulch. I never looked for it, for it made me sick to even think about it. He said Floyd and Frank Smith, Hank Simms and Tom Cahill, Shorty Burton, Lafe McDougal, half-brothers the . . . McDougals were to Lafe, and one of the Clark's boys, Ned . . . all threw in together on . . . to pay the $1000 dollars . . . I had nothing to do with . . . after he told me . . . He was like putty in their hands. I will be here two more . . . Goodnight, darling. I love you so, your mother, Jane Hickok Burke.

The letter below was written by Calamity Jane to Captain James O'Neil of Richmond, Va., telling of her divorce from Wild Bill.

Dakota Territory, 1876

I now take my pen in hand to let you know I delivered the paper to Bill Hickok. He is free now to marry that woman. I am broken hearted, Jim, but he and I couldn't go on together. His folks didn't think I was good enough for him. I will be the laughing stock of this country now for sure. You must write often, Jim. Your letters help me. The photograph of Janey is so cute. How I wish I could see her. The lock of hair is Bill's. Keep it for Janey, also the photograph album.

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This picture, a hunting trip my son and I made, was compiled and painted in full color from six black-and-white photos, two of which were not taken on the hunt. For a subject I made both of us drinking coffee and called it "Coffee Break at Annapolis Rock."

I have an idea that people might like this kind of art for their living room wall more than a plain picture, especially if the subject is about them. All I need to paint one for someone's wall is enough photos to get the facts straight and a description of the subject. Anything goes that is within reason. The result will be an original painting no camera could ever take—mounted, framed, and ready to hang. The picture would not be assembly line work or trick photo.

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I can hardly bear to go on. With love and thank you for the money.

Jane

The letter below, original on file in Billings, Mont., office, Department of Public Welfare, was sent in response to a query from welfare officials as to We The People's opinion of Mrs. Jean Hickok McCormick's identity. This reply and results of other investigations by the welfare department satisfied the Government that Mrs. McCormick was the daughter of Calamity Jane and Wild Bill, and she was deemed eligible for old age assistance on September 6, 1941.

WE THE PEOPLE
C-B-S Network
285 Madison Avenue, New York City
Ashland 4-8400-8437

August 6, 1941

Miss Marion D. Schumacher
Yellowstone County
Department of Public Welfare
Billings, Montana

cc: Mrs. Jean Hickok McCormick
Broadway Hotel, Billings, Montana

Re: 56-3773
McCORMICK, Jean

Dear Miss Schumacher:

We have your letter of July 31 regarding the necessity of establishing Mrs. Jean Hickok McCormick's date of birth.

We have read the diary of Calamity Jane in which it was stated: "September 25, 1877—My dear, this is your birthday and you are four years old today." Later in the diary, we also found: "September 25, 1891—You are eighteen years old today."

Examination of the material that Mrs. McCormick showed us, coupled with our consideration of the character of Mrs. McCormick, convinced us that these writings were authentic and were not forged by Mrs. McCormick. We therefore accept her as the daughter of Calamity Jane and would fix her birthday as September 25, 1873.

A great deal of interest was stirred up by Mrs. McCormick's appearance on our program. Many people refused to believe that Calamity Jane ever had a daughter, due to the fact that Calamity Jane tried very hard to conceal the fact for the daughter's own good. Other people disbelieved that Calamity Jane was ever married to Wild Bill Hickok. There seems to have been several Hickoks in the West—two of them called Wild Bill. The one referred to in Calamity Jane's diary died in 1876, according to the diary.

I should just like to put in here for the records that on April 30th of this year, six days prior to our broadcast on which Mrs. McCormick appeared, a letter was written to us by Miss Ella Warren Axe, Route 3, Box 306, Santa Ana, California —Telephone—Westminster 8262. This letter, from an interested listener, was very gratifying to us, as it substantiated our belief in Mrs. McCormick's veracity and the authenticity of the writings of Calamity Jane which she possesses. The entire letter is as follows:

"We The People
New York City

Gentlemen:

You may be interested to know in connection with your program next week that my father, Wm. F. Warren, who built the first church in Cheyenne, Wyoming, married Wild Bill (Wm.) Hickok and Calamity Jane. He often spoke of them.

Yours sincerely,
Ella Warren Axe"

I think the whole story of Mrs. McCormick, of her life, and of the loneliness her Mother endured through her self-imposed separation from her daughter, is one of the greatest stories in American western history; and I hope that Mrs. McCormick will take good care of her various writings and possessions from her Mother, including a brooch and various pictures, and that she will will them to a worthy museum when she dies.

Very truly yours,
Vivien Skinner
WE THE PEOPLE

Muddy Creek Feud

(Continued from page 19)

This was not the future he had worked and sweated for; not for this had he worried and tried to be both mother and father to his sons. This lifeless, bullet-torn body ripped his father's heart to aching shreds.

"Why did you you do it, son?" Tom whispered brokenly as he knelt beside the body of the boy.

No tears fell, but his broken heart swelled and hurt until it was almost too painful to bear. Aware of the men gathered around the body, Tom ignored them completely. With steady steps he walked over to the boy's mare and led her back to his once vitally alive man-child.

One of the men started to help lift the boy, but Wilson stopped him with a glance. Gently he lifted Tom, Jr., onto the saddle, face down. Firmly he tied the boy's hands and feet together under the mare's belly.

The smell of death made her skittish, and Tom jerked hard to quiet her. Surprised at the unexpected harsh treatment, the mare reared and the body slid backward. Wilson's weathered face shattered into a thousand pieces of hopelessness and despair as he readjusted the body.

TOM WILSON was indicted by a Grand Jury in Gunnison, Colorado, on fifty separate charges brought by Ed Harper. Garfield County officials arrested Wilson in Carbondale, where he had gone to bury his son, having packed the boy's body over McClure Pass and down the Crystal Valley. Gunnison County Sheriff, "Doc" Shores, took Wilson to the County seat, where he was jailed for the killings.

For a small meadow of wild mountain hay, three men had died and another was to die before the year was gone from wounds inflicted that fatal day.

Harper's party, containing Ed Harper, H. D. Jones, Charles Major, Alexander Labelle, Peter Small, and Charles Purham, paid dearly for trying to take Wilson's hay. Two men were dead, Alexander Labelle and Peter Small. Another, Charles Purham, was destined to die of his wounds.

Wilson paid for his son's hasty first shot with the life of that same son. The others in his crew, Nick Anderson, Ed Hardesty, Schuyler Hodson, and George Dufford, were unharmed.

Hardesty and Hodson were also indicted. Upon hearing of the charges against them they tried to flee the country, but were apprehended in Montrose County.

Trial was set for April, 1891, in Gunnison, Colorado, Judge Bell presiding. During the trial, twenty different witnesses testified to the troubles leading up to the final battle. Public opinion soon changed to favor Wilson.

On April 11, 1891, the twelve men on the jury returned a verdict of not guilty

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on all counts and Wilson was a free man, but a bitter one. At one time he had preferred charges against Harper, but now he was no longer interested in pressing charges further. It was completely dropped, for justice in those hectic mining days was not as precise and relentless as it is today.

Discouraged and heartsick, Wilson left the country with his other boys and was never heard of again. He traveled to find forgetfulness, but the past continued to haunt him.

Ed Harper, too, quit the country, but returned to Carbondale in his later years. There he became a recluse until the day of his death in 1948 at the age of 92.

Editor's Note: The names of the principal parties in this article have been changed to avoid possible embarrassment to their living descendants.

Truly Western

(Continued from page 29)

I also recall an incident at a rodeo at Prescott, Arizona. A group of us were taking part in the event and also getting some good shots for a picture we were making at the time. Vic Frith, Clyde Merritt, Harry Lovern (my husband), Sid Jordan, Doc Pardee, Lon Jordan and many others were participating—also Tom Mix.

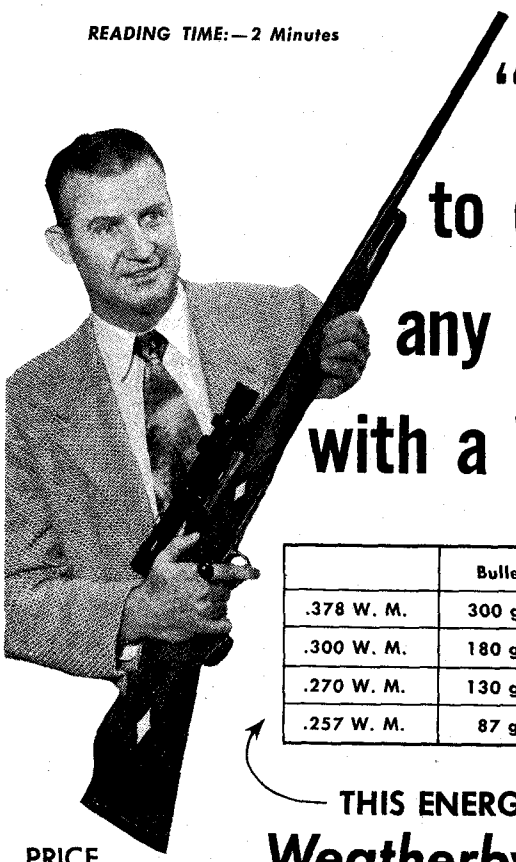
Tom bulldogged his steer from his horse, Old Blue, at that time. The still cameras caught a picture of him in action. I took one, too, and still have it. Unfortunately, it is of too poor quality for reproduction in TW. I will, however, include a snapshot of Tom taken at that time, and one of Sid Jordan and Herman Nowlin at Tom's grave. (Tom was killed in an auto accident in 1940.)

Sid Jordan and Herman Nowlin at Mix's grave.

I never saw Tom punching cows, but there isn't any doubt that he had the nerve and skill to do it if he'd had any occasion. Often, on location, I've heard him refuse a double for some dangerous stunt. "No," he'd say, "if it can be done, I can do it." I have seen him do some terribly dangerous stunts. I tell about them in my story on Tom Mix, which I am holding for a picture studio because they pay so much better than a publisher.

Incidentally, Olive Mix lived here with me and read my story. Now she has written her own story on her and Tom. Prentice-Hall is publishing it. I believe it is titled: "My Life With The Fabulous Tom Mix." Olive's book will clear up a lot of controversy. As she said to me, "Blanche, I put Tom in pictures."—Blanche Lovern, 3844½ Overland Avenue, Culver City, California.

READING TIME:—2 Minutes



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Dear Editor:

In regard to Mr. Dill's letter on Tom Mix, I most heartily agree with him. I worked on the 101 Ranch, and of all the hands on the ranch not one had any use for Tom Mix. The boys told me Tom learned to ride on the 101.

Here is an illuminating sidelight on Tom Mix, the MAN: In 1929 (I believe the year is correct) Tom Mix came to Minneapolis and a school holiday was declared. Tom was met at the station with an old stagecoach, resurrected for the occasion. He met the Boy Scouts and agreed to meet them at a banquet at night and told them he would be the host. All the kids gathered to meet him on the night of the banquet, but Tom Mix had left town. You can imagine the kids' disappointment, and later on, their opinion of this great star of the screen!

As to the magazine article that claimed Mix was the greatest rider of them all, my answer is "Bosh!" What about old Bill Pickett, who was the only man ever to bulldog a buffalo at the 101 Ranch? Mexican Joe and Will Rogers were also top class vaqueros. Also many more, too many to name here. I just hope that some of the old-timers will rear up on their hind legs and give their opinions of Tom Mix. I believe that most old-timers will agree that the best vaqueros were Indians and Negroes, but as they were not white folks, they were not recognized.

I am close to 70 and have seen some good riders in my day.

To all the old-timers: May there be fresh cool water and good green grass at the end of the Sunset Trail.—J. (Red) Grimes, Box 23, Wonder, Oregon.

Editor, *True West:*

A gentleman named C. A. Dill, of Oklahoma, wrote to you criticizing the late Tom Mix. I'd like to say that, with the exception of Buffalo Bill Cody, Tom Mix was the greatest showman of all time. Zack Miller and Tom had a falling out over money. Up until that time Zack and Tom were good friends, but from then on Miller was very bitter and critical of Tom.

I have personally seen Tom Mix in action many times and can testify that his roping was as good or better than most of the old-time ropers. Old-timers such as Charlie Williams, the great bronc rider of the 1920's, often said that jealousy was the reason for the harsh criticism of Tom Mix. Charlie Mulhall, son of the late Zack Mulhall, said that Tom was right up there with the best of them at riding and roping. These men are personal acquaintances, and their word is good enough for me. As for the things that have been written about Tom's life: Show business is show business. As Buffalo Bill once said; "My God, the things they write about me!"

I am anxious to see the true facts of Tom Mix's life story published, if it is possible to separate the Man from the Myth. I for one, have voted for Tom Mix to take his rightful place among those honored in "The Cowboy Hall of Fame" to be opened this year in Oklahoma City. —Dan Hill, 6-B Allen Project V. V., Henderson, Nevada.

Editor, Truly Western:

I write this letter in reply to Mr. C. A. Dill, in regard to his opinion of Tom Mix as expressed in your magazine:

Mr. Dill challenges the fact that Tom Mix was an actual cowboy. All my life I have admired Tom Mix and have done plenty of research on the life of this fascinating character. While Mr. Dill is correct in stating that Tom Mix never worked as a cowboy on the Miller Brothers 101 Ranch, he is completely erroneous in his belief that Tom was never a genuine cowboy. Tom Mix worked as a cowboy on the 8,000 acre ranch of Colonel Zack Mulhall, near Guthrie, Oklahoma. Will Rogers also worked at this ranch at this time.

Mr. Dill states that Colonel Zack Miller, shortly before his death, belittled Tom as a cowboy. That was a result of Mix's falling out with his old employer in 1929. Colonel Miller claimed the movie star had signed a contract to appear in his (Miller's) Wild West Show that year. Mix traveled with the Sells Floto Circus. Miller sued Tom, and several lawsuits followed. Mix walked out of one of those trials owing the Colonel $90,000.

Not only was Tom Mix a real cowboy, but he also fought in three wars, acted as a deputy sheriff in Oklahoma and Kansas, served as town marshal in Richard City, Tennessee, and as a Deputy U. S. Marshal. In addition to being a movie star and a Wild West showman, Tom was also a hobo and a bartender in the days when the West was still wild. One might ask Mr. Dill if this wasn't enough for one man without being "a working Texas Ranger."

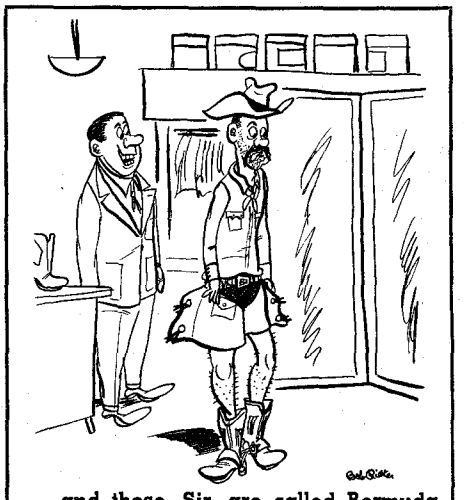
There seems to be a big demand for an authentic article on Tom Mix to be published in the greatest magazine on the Old West ever printed—*True West.* I hope this demand will be met in the near future.—Sam Henderson, 306 Telford St., Alway, Tennessee.

Well, folks, here we go again! First Wyatt Earp, then Bill Hickok, Billy the Kid—and now Tom Mix. And, as always the case in these ruckuses, some letters are for and some ag'in. As the shell game operators used to say: "You pays your money and you takes your choice." Do you wonder why editors and publishers get gray hairs?

Hickok Versus Tom Threepersons

Dear Editor.

I deeply resent the letter by Eugene Stagg about Bill Hickok, printed in your February, 1957, issue. I am nearing my 82nd birthday and, thank heaven, my teeth, eyes, hearing and memory are as good as they were forty years ago, and I certainly resent seeing a letter by anyone calling Bill Hickok a rat.



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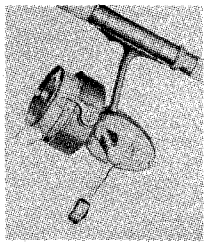

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I lived in Deadwood, South Dakota, during the time Hickok came there. My father was a close friend of the man who owned the bar where Bill was killed, and he was also a deputy sheriff in Kansas during Hickok's reign. I also happen to be related to the famous Dave Cook, of Denver, Colorado.

Apparently this man Stagg was more of a stag than a man. I presume he is a glutton for seeing his name in the limelight. People who knew Hickok will never question his veracity, his courage and calmness. He handled men with equal justice to all. He never took advantage of anyone. As for his shooting ability, he competed with the best men of that age. For quick drawing and quick firing, he outshot them all. He was never known to boast about himself. Stagg should be ashamed for writing such a letter about a man who fought on the side of the law and never shot a man unless he was forced to do so in self-defense.

Someone should take a slingshot, fill it full of red pepper seeds, make Stagg close his eyes, then splash his face hard enough to make him never forget writing such a ridiculous, dirty letter about Bill Hickok—C. C. Cook, 5675 W. Washington Blvd., Los Angeles 16, California.

Gentlemen:

I note that there is quite a controversy going on in your magazine on Wild Bill Hickok. I have long had a prejudice about Hickok, as it was established many years ago that Hickok had a yellow streak a yard wide up and down his back. He was no Wyatt Earp; in fact he could not be compared to Earp in any capacity except as a gunslinger . . .

The most cowardly killing ever committed by Hickok was the murder of Phil Coe. Coe was not an argumentative man and seldom carried a gun. A chorus girl named Jessie Hazel was in love with Coe, but Hickok wanted the girl himself. He invaded her hotel room while staggering drunk and found Coe there. There was a fist fight which Coe won. He was straddling Hickok, strangling him, when the Hazel girl intervened, saving Hickok's life. A few days later Coe picked up a pistol to kill a dog that had been annoying people. Hickok heard the shot and came to investigate. While he was talking to Coe, a commotion up the street caused Coe to turn his head toward the noise. Hickok shot him. According to Bud Cotton, an eye witness, Phil told Hickok just before he died: "Hickok, you're a dirty dog! You shot me while I wasn't looking. I hope they get you the same way." They did.

Coe's partner at the Bull's Head Saloon, Ben Thompson, was laid up in Kansas City with a broken leg at the time . . . Perhaps if Ben had been in a normal state of health there would have been a showdown between Hickok and him. But by the time Ben could get around normally, Hickok had pulled his freight from Abilene, going to Deadwood, S. D., where he was shot from behind by Jack McCall.

The real gunfighters of the day, the Thompsons, the Hardins, the Clements and the Allisons, respected Wyatt Earp as a brave man but they had only contempt for Hickok, the same as they did for any cowardly killer of that day and time. None of these men ever attempted a real showdown with Wyatt Earp, for they realized that even though they might kill him, he would get some of them in the process. It was quite differ-

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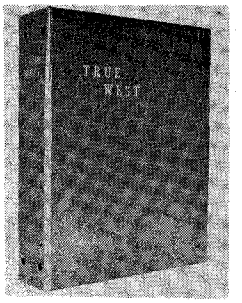

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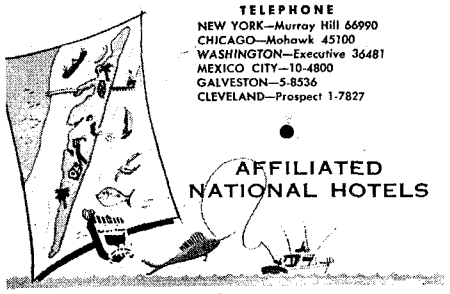

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ent with Hickok. A showdown with any of these men was always in order for Hickok, but he never forced the issue. Bill knew in his own mind he was not a Wyatt Earp, and that most of these men, if not all of them, were his equal on the draw. What's more, not one of them was yellow—and he knew *he* was.—A. D. Covin, 13609 Courrege Lane, Houston 9, Texas.

Dear Editor:

I would like to ask Mr. Eugene Stagg, of Floweree, Montana, where he got all his information on Wild Bill Hickok. In all the reading I have ever done on Hickok I have never run across a thing to give me the impression he was that kind of man—a rat.

Also I would like to get some information on the Tom Threepersons Stagg mentioned in his letter. I have never heard of him.—Raymond Gentry, Box 503, Atkinson, Illinois.

Editor, Truly Western:

In the February, 1957, issue of *True West,* I was greatly alarmed about a certain letter in "Truly Western" concerning Bill Hickok.

I'm not saying that Bill Hickok was a hero, but I *will* say he was the greatest and fastest gunslinger of his era. He was one of the very few men to carry and *use* two pistols. Bill Tilghman, Charlie Siringo, Earp, and Masterson all considered Hickok the West's greatest shot. If we talk about speed and reflexes, here it is: The pistol Jack McCall used to shoot Hickok in the back of the head missed fire on every cartridge except the first one. Hickok's reflexes were so fast he had already drawn two pistols and turned to shoot as he fell dead with a bullet in the back of his head.

If Tom Threepersons was so fast as to let his opponents draw first, then draw, cock and wait to shoot until making sure his opponent cleared leather—well, I'm afraid Tom didn't want to live very long!

I thought everybody knew that a fancy gunslinger could draw from holster, shoot, and hit what he was aiming at within ten or twelve yards in approximately a quarter of a second. A fancy gunslinger could fire five shots in four-fifths of a second.

If Tom Threepersons was such a fancy gunslinger, why isn't he rated among the top gunslingers at that time? Tom might have been fast on the draw, but he didn't have any competition such as Bill Tilghman, Charlie Siringo, Wyatt Earp, Bat Masterson, and—especially—Wild Bill Hickok.—Dick Cash, 1814 East 10th St., Pueblo, Colorado.

Well Boys, Here's Tom Threepersons Himself! Argue it Out With Tom.

Editor, *True West:*

Through the columns of your magazine I would like to express my deep appreciation to Eugene Stagg, of Floweree, Montana, for his complimentary letter in my behalf. As a law officer, I greatly appreciated it.

But first I would like to correct the statement that I am a "half-breed Indian." I am not a half-breed, but a full-blooded Indian of the Cherokee tribe of Oklahoma, and naturally very proud of my heritage as a "First American."

And please let me tell you that I have never had any desire to be placed in a class with Wild Bill Hickok, Billy the Kid, or any of the so-called Western bad men. My desire was and still is to be classed as a respectable officer of the law and its enforcement. I did my duty to the best of my ability, as I was sworn to do, and that was all. I can truthfully say I never took advantage of any man that was under my protection, but treated him as my equal, as no man is guilty until he is proven so, and I was not the judge and jury.

I am proud of my record as a peace officer in the Southwest and along the border where I was a civilian officer. I also had a number of jobs with the Federal Government: Internal Revenue Agent, U. S. Mounted Customs Inspector, and Intelligence officer.

I served my hitch in World War I, volunteering at the first call for volunteers, and was honorably discharged at the close of the war. I tried hard to enlist for World War II.

At present I live near Silver City, New Mexico—the Sunshine State and Land of *Manana,* a beautiful country.—Tom Threepersons (Retired), P. O. Box 271, Silver City, New Mexico.

Thanks, Tom, for your good letter. Nice to hear from a living lawman of the West who generally managed to bring his prisoner in alive instead of face-down across a saddle horse.

TW Readers Answer Mr. Vance

Dear Joe:

First off, I'd like to tell Mr. Vance to slow down and enjoy life. He is in a mite too much of a hurry, and if he doesn't watch himself, he won't be around long to read your fine magazine.

I have to disagree with him when he says that certain of your articles are too long. For example: Of all the stories you've printed since the inception of *True West* in 1953, my choice is Norman B. Wiltsey's "Children of the Raven" in April and June, 1955, TW. I looked forward to the conclusion of that story for the two solid months it took you folks to finally send me my "bible."

To be honest with you, I don't think you print *enough* stories of length, so that the reader can start to understand what actually happened. I *like* a lot of detail, and I believe that most TW readers like it. For instance, everybody knows that Custer was killed by Indians. The details *behind* that fact are what make your publication worth reading. Everybody, old-timers and all, want you to tell us something new, instead of the old run-of-the-mill stuff that everybody already knows . . . Michael Flanigan, 1861 Belmore Road, East Cleveland, Ohio.

Dear Editor:

In reference to Mr. Vance's letter in the June TW, suggesting that you shorten your stories:

We like the long stories and the short ones too. Some stories just can't be told as a solid, well-rounded narrative in only a few sentences. If Mr. Vance wants TW yarns shorter, he can read just the first and the last lines and let it go at that. Probably he doesn't get much out of his reading anyway.—E. F. Wilhelm, Pryor, Montana.

Editor *True West:*

This letter is prompted by Mr. Vance's letter in your June issue . . . . Mr. Vance claims that your articles are too long. They are *not* too long. Lord knows there are enough sketchy condensations, abridgements, etc., to be found in most magazines. I earnestly hope that you will not fall into that common error of giving us sketchy, incomplete articles. Surely even the poor tired businessman finds

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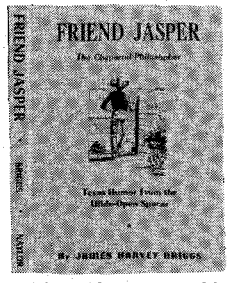

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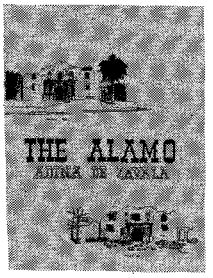

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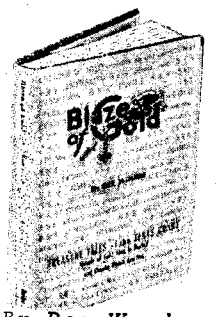

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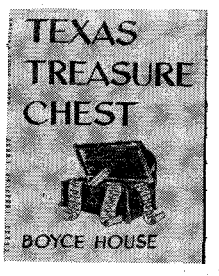

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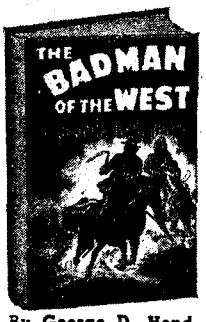

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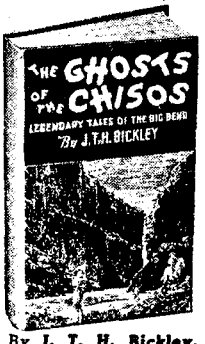

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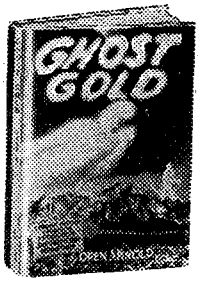

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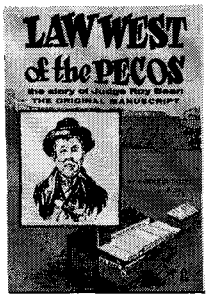

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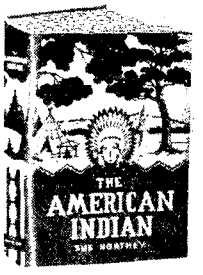

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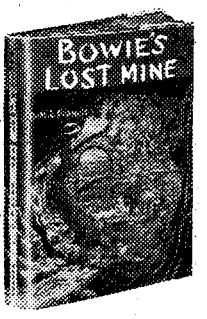

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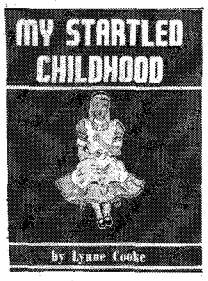

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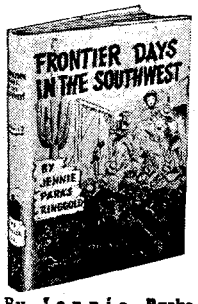

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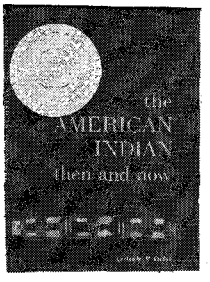

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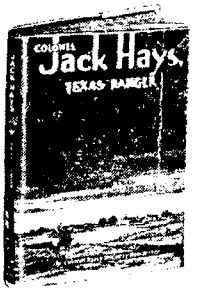

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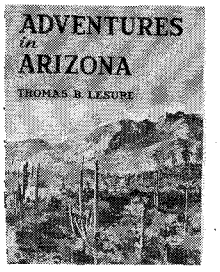

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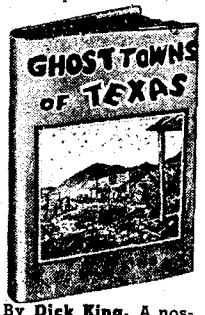

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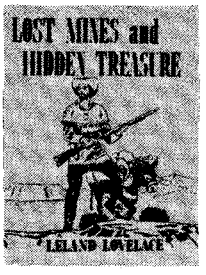

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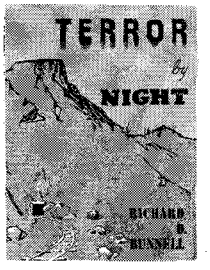

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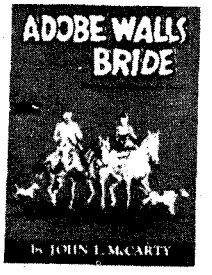

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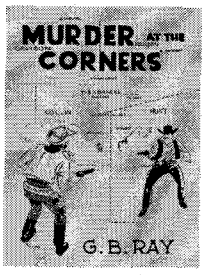

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time for other pursuits. Maybe men today want to do things in a hurry, but when there is reading to be done for pleasure and relaxation, who in the world wants to "cover the situation with as little time as possible." I can't imagine anyone with that attitude ever reading for pleasure at all. When I read in *True West* of a well-known character, I expect—or at least, I *hope*—to find out more than I already know about the subject. Otherwise, why bother to read it? After all, you are editing a magazine for people who are especially interested in the field that you cover. These people must feel that "you can't get too much of a good thing."

So, PLEASE! Be complete, comprehensive, accurate. If the articles are well-written, you won't bore your readers. After all, they are enthusiasts to begin with or they wouldn't BE your readers. Right? I hope I'm expressing the views of the majority on this important subject. In any case, I certainly felt impelled to speak up.—Fred White, 1312 East 53rd Street, Chicago 15, Illinois.

Editor's Note: Mr. White did indeed express the views of the majority on this important question of TRUE WEST editorial policy. Of 42 letters received on this matter, 37 either voted for long articles or expressed satisfaction with the magazine as it is now made up.

Requests for Information From TW Readers

Dear Mr. Wiltsey:

I am appealing to *True West* readers for help in locating relatives of the following men who were pallbearers at Jesse Woodson James' funeral held at Kearney, Missouri, April 6, 1882, at the Baptist Church: J. D. Ford (Deputy Marshal), J. T. Reed, Charles Scott, James Henderson, William Bond, and Rev. J. P. Martin, the pastor who delivered the funeral sermon.

I would appreciate hearing from any relative of the above persons—Bill Green, 1512 North Carona, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Dear Norm:

I am a new reader and am very grateful for the gift of a copy of your wonderful and interesting magazine. I have always enjoyed the *true* facts of the Old West. I hope more old-timers get their life stories into print before it is too late.

I hope you will have space to print this letter as I wish to try to locate somebody through your magazine. This is Brother E. Wilhelm, a pastor of the Church of God (7th Day). The last I heard from him was over a year ago when he was living on Route 5 in Paris, Texas. Since then my letters have been returned. He has a daughter in Fort Worth and a son who is also a minister somewhere in Arizona or New Mexico. I believe he also has a daughter living somewhere in California.

Brother Wilhelm was 90 years old and almost blind, the last I heard of him. It is very important that I, who claim him *as a very dear friend*, know where he is. Anyone knowing anything about him or his children, please write me. I am in ill health and cannot go to Paris, Texas, to seek him. Maybe he has crossed the Great Divide, but I hope not.—Mrs. John E. Esteves, General Delivery, El Centro, California.

Howdy, readers of *True West*:

I am finishing up a book on the Olive brothers of Texas—cattlemen and Texas Trail Drivers. I would like, before finishing it, to be sure I haven't missed any factual material on them. Anyone knowing *anything* about I. P. (Print) Olive, Jay Olive, Ira, Bob, or Marion Olive, please write me at once.—Harry E. Chrisman, Lane D, Apt. 74, BBC, Liberal, Kansas.

Howdy, Brother Polecat!

Opposite of Gentlemen:

Says one polecat to another: here is my stinking check for $3.00 to renew my subscription to your loud-smelling magazine.

Sometime change your clothes and come to Commerce and I will take you down to my ranch, where I have Jackrabbits instead of Skunks. Disrespectfully.—Sterling Hart (Retired but not tired, 1956, after 70 years as Writer, Printer and Publisher), Commerce, Texas.

STATEMENT REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (TITLE 39, United States Code, Section 233) SHOWING THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION OF TRUE WEST, published bi-monthly at Austin, Texas, with additional entry at Denver, Colorado for October 1, 1957.

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Joe Austell Small, 3303 Bridle Path, Austin, Texas; Editor, Fred Gipson, P. O. Box 266, Mason, Texas; Managing editor, none; Business manager, none.
2. The owner is: Joe Austell Small, 3303 Bridle Path, Austin, Texas.
3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

(Signed) JOE AUSTELL SMALL, Publisher

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 13th day of September, 1957.

A. D. Leshikar
Notary Public
(Seal) (My commission expires June, 1959.)

Coming Up !

(Continued from page 1)

gives you the essence of his studies in this concise yet comprehensive article.

Nat McKelvey, another noted spinner of Western yarns, makes his bow to TW readers with an engrossing tale of stagecoach robbery and a hasty lynching. "Riddle of the Redfie'd Robbers" is a ringing indictment of so-called "frontier justice" where far too often the mob held sway.

Interesting shorts include L. W. Hubbard's spooky yarn of a strange horseback ride, "A Race With Death," and George Phillips' unforgettable account of a "Storm on the Range."

"Wild Old Days" and Truly Western start off the new year in good shape.

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WANTED! TRUE WEST back issues #3, #12. John Carnprobst, 7908 Inglenook Place, Pittsburgh 21, Pa.

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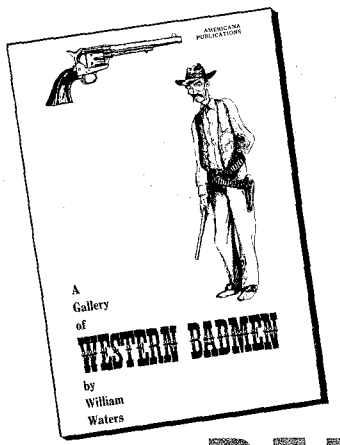

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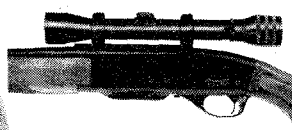

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